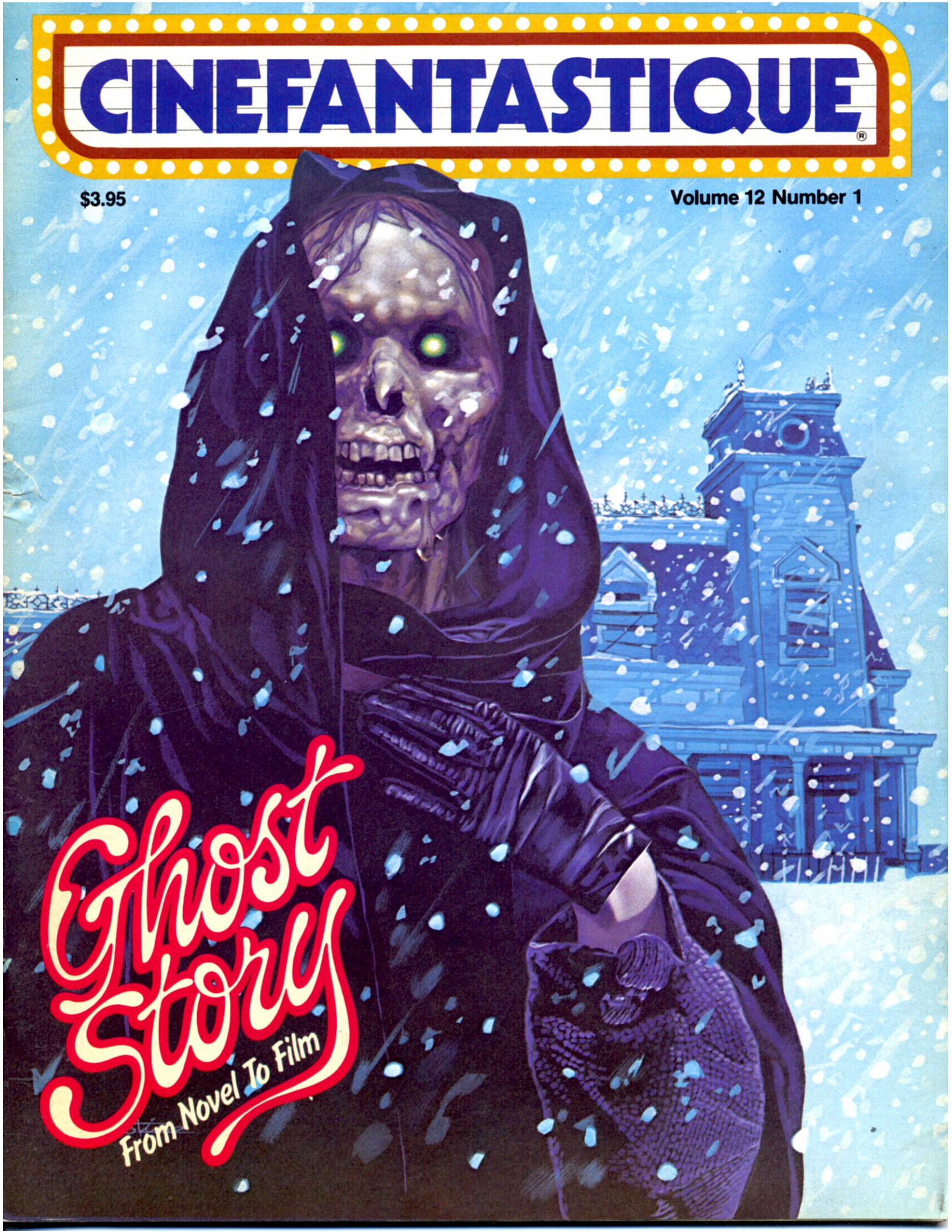


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Volume 12 Number 1

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Stories*
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Executive Producer DOUGLAS C. KENNEY Produced by ALAN GREISMAN and
MICHAEL SHAMBERG Written by KEN SHAPIRO & TOM SHEROHMAN & ARTHUR SELLERS

Directed by KEN SHAPIRO Music by DOMINIC FRONTIERE COLOR BY DELUXE®

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COMING TO THEATRES EVERYWHERE CHRISTMAS DAY

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VOLUME 12 NUMBER 1

The magazine "Sense of Wonder."

FEBRUARY, 1982

When we decide to cover a film before it's released, there's always a degree of trepidation that we might be a little red-faced if it turns out to be a turkey. Sometimes projects with the greatest potential turn out to be the least satisfying, simply because expectations run so high. *THE SHINING* is a perfect example.

Writer Paul R. Gagne began work more than *two years* ago on this issue devoted to author Peter Straub and the filming of his best seller, *Ghost Story*—long before Stanley Kubrick layed his egg on Stephen King. But when *THE SHINING* bombed, all eyes turned, apprehensively, toward *GHOST STORY*, certainly the most prestigious, eagerly awaited horror film then on the horizon. And the word was not good. *Changes* were being made in Straub's novel, and changes were what made *THE SHINING* such a disappointment. The fact that filmmakers of obvious talent were making the changes hardly mattered. Who, after all, had better credentials than Stanley Kubrick?

Since I, like most everyone else, let some degree of pessimism cloud my anticipation, I was more than a little thrilled to discover that director John Irvin's version of *GHOST STORY* makes for one of the best ghost stories ever filmed. Forget that Stanley Kubrick took a few wrong turns in the Overlook Hotel, because John Irvin has been able to see clearly the ghost in Straub's snowstorm.

The changes made by Irvin, and writer Lawrence D. Cohen, sacrifice many of the supernatural elements and set pieces that made Straub's novel so memorable. That is regrettable, but the paring serves to focus Straub's horror tale and give it a deep dramatic resonance that is charged with emotion. The greatest horror in Irvin's film is the careless drowning of an innocent girl, a tragedy that haunts the men responsible, literally, to their graves.

GHOST STORY demonstrates that there's nothing wrong with changes, especially when they're an improvement.

Frederick S. Clarke



GHOST STORIES: 14 THE NOVELS OF PETER STRAUB

In 1975, he wrote his first horror novel, *Julia*, strictly for the cash. Now, four best-sellers later, Peter Straub has emerged as one of the luminaries in a crowded field.

20 THE MAKING OF GHOST STORY

By scaling down the sprawling narrative, director John Irvin has managed the near-impossible—transforming Straub's complex novel into a logical, tightly-knit film.

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Picking up where the apes in *2001* left off, presenting a serious portrayal of prehistoric man. But surviving the arduous production was nearly as hard as surviving the Pleistocene Epoch.

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John Carpenter remakes the Howard Hawks classic—returning to the John W. Campbell short story that Hawks left behind—aided by state-of-the-art makeup effects from Rob Bottin.

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The stars aren't the human actors—they're the incredible robots, the fusion of Stan Winston's makeup and the ingenious special effects work of Mel Arnold, Robbie Blalack and Jamie Shourt.

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PUBLISHER AND EDITOR: Frederick S. Clarke. **MANAGING EDITOR:** Michael Kaplan.

BUREAUS: New York: David Bartholomew, Dan Scapperotti; Los Angeles: Jordan R. Fox, Kyle Counts; London: Mike Childs, Alan Jones; Paris: Frederic Albert Levy.

CONTRIBUTORS: Kay Anderson, Paul R. Gagne, Judith P. Harris, David J. Hogan, Bill Kelley, Tim Lucas, Ray Pride, Stephen Rebello, Paul M. Sammon, Allen Smithee, W. R. Walthall. **Associate Editor:** Cory Glaberson. **Office Staff:** Robert T. Garcia, Liz Woodruff and David Hoppe, Angela Inkmann & Paul Speidel.

PHOTO CREDITS: *GHOST STORY* photos © 1981 Universal Studios. Photos of Rick Baker makeups (page 39) by Steve Johnson. Photos of Peter Straub (page 14, 19) © 1981 Paul R. Gagne. *HALLOWEEN II* photos (page 52); photo of Rick Rosenthal (page 9) by Kim Gottlieb © 1981 Dino De Laurentis Corp. *CONAN* photos (page 56) © 1981 Dino De Laurentis Corp. Photo of CINEFANTASTIQUE jacket and t-shirt (page 55) by Jim Stewart; model, Pamela Green. **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:** Rick Baker, Rob Blalack, Mick Garris, Scot Holton, Paula Jamrock, John Illis Associates, Peter Kuran, Linda Levine, Booker McClay, Fredell Pogodin, Dick Smith, Stan Winston.

CINEFANTASTIQUE MAGAZINE (ISSN 0145-6032) is published five times a year, in February, April, July, September and December at P.O. Box 270, Oak Park, Illinois 60303. Second class postage paid at Oak Park, Illinois 60303. **POSTMASTER:** Send address changes to CINEFANTASTIQUE, P.O. Box 270, Oak Park Illinois 60303. **Subscriptions:** Four Issues \$14, Eight Issues \$26, Twelve Issues \$36. (Foreign subscriptions: Four issues \$17, Eight Issues \$31, Twelve Issues \$43, payable in USA funds only, please.) Single copies when purchased from the publisher: \$6. **Retail Distribution** in the United States and Canada by Bernhard DeBoer, Inc., 113 E. Centre Street, Nutley, N. J. 07110. (201) 667-9300. In Great Britain by Titan Distributors. Other countries please apply for liberal discount and terms of sale. **Advertising rates** and specifications are available on request. **Classified ad rates** are available on page 46. **Submissions** of art, articles, reviews and story suggestions are encouraged, but no correspondence can be answered unless accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Printed in USA. Contents copyright © 1981 by Frederick S. Clarke. CINEFANTASTIQUE is a Registered U. S. Trademark.

COMING

PSYCHO II—THE RETURN OF NORMAN

Two Hollywood neophytes ask the question, "Do you need to buy the rights to film a sequel?"

By Kyle Counts

Just when you thought it was safe to take a shower again here comes THE RETURN OF NORMAN (as in Bates, owner of the small hotel where a certain Miriam Crane was stabbed to death in her bungalow shower.) The \$9 million suspense thriller, is scheduled to begin shooting in early 1982 for the Picture Striking Company, according to writers-producers Gary Travis and Michael January. It is not a sequel, they maintain, but a completely new story drawing upon Hitchcock's PSYCHO (1960).

The project is not affiliated with either Universal studios or writer Robert Bloch, who wrote the original book. Universal's legal department declined to comment about it, but Bloch was not so reticent, calling stories in the *L.A. Times* about the film "a complete fabrication, from start of finish."

"These gentlemen who represent themselves as screenwriters are not members of the writers guild," said Bloch. "The man who is alleged to be producer of this project [Doc Erikson of BLADE RUNNER] disclaims any knowledge of it whatsoever. Nobody has been cast or signed and apparently these gentlemen have no realization that there are such things as copyright laws and screenrights. I'm further advised that Universal Pictures have sent these gentleman a very firm letter telling them to cease and desist."

But lawyers from Universal don't scare Travis and January who have simply retained their own copyright lawyers to handle any hassles handed them by the studio. As long as they don't lean too heavily on the book or the film, said their lawyers, it is perfectly legal to use the characters.

"In as much as I am aware of copyright law," responded Bloch. "I don't think it is legal to infringe upon a work that is still in copyright and still in print. The copyright happens to be in my name. The fictional rights are mine as well, although MCA [owners of Universal] bought the movie rights from Paramount [who bought them from Hitchcock in a stock deal]. It was a Paramount film, you know, it was only made on the Universal lot."

Bloch has written a second book taking place in a parallel universe with the action brought up to date. "I was told that Universal was considering doing a sequel to PSYCHO for cable television," he said, "but that this has yet to appear."

Nevertheless, Travis and January are forging ahead with their screenplay for THE RETURN OF NORMAN (still a working title). The

action is set in present day California, beginning with Norman's escape from the institution he has been incarcerated in for the past two decades. Meanwhile, Lila Crane, sister of Norman's last victim, tries to resolve the terrible memories of her sister's death by purchasing the old Bates motel, and house, reopening it to the public. Crane's college-age daughter returns for a reunion with mom while Norman (who takes exception to the adage "you can't go home again") waits in the wings.

"I have a great fear of superlatives," said January. "I think the film will be quite frightening, but I'd hate to tell the audience how they're supposed to react. I think we've managed to include a moment that will be as much-remembered and talked about

as the shower scene in PSYCHO. We also have a shower scene, by the way, but that's not necessarily the moment I'm referring to."

"Our first script had nothing at all to do with PSYCHO," said the 26 year-old January. "We were working on a story about a woman who moves into a haunted motel, which turns out not to be haunted—there are actually people living inside who are trying to drive her mad." While mulling over possible titles for their gothic screenplay, Travis suddenly thought of PSYCHO and wondered why no one had ever continued the story of Norman Bates. When he suggested THE RETURN OF NORMAN to January the story implications became clear and they began a massive rewrite.

"We decided if we were going to attempt this film at all," Travis said, "we owed it to the public who loved PSYCHO to try and put together something that didn't lean on Hitchcock's movie. We quickly moved away from the idea of a direct sequel, because most sequels wind up being second rate, and we wanted to do something completely original."

Yet, Travis and January see themselves filling the gap left by Hitchcock and want to return to the type of film he would make. "If this script had been written while Hitchcock was still alive, we would have offered it to him," said January. "Our film is connected to his only in a visceral kind of way. It's our hope to go back to the pure technique that made PSYCHO such an affecting film experience."

"We're taking special pains to avoid what other directors have done in the genre," Travis added. "We rely far less on blood and gore. I think audiences are moving away from the graphic trend of movies; they've grossed out on them. We feel that the movie will go back to suspense and titillation rather than blatant grue and slashings. Our script is definitely more in the tradition of Hitchcock than John Carpenter."

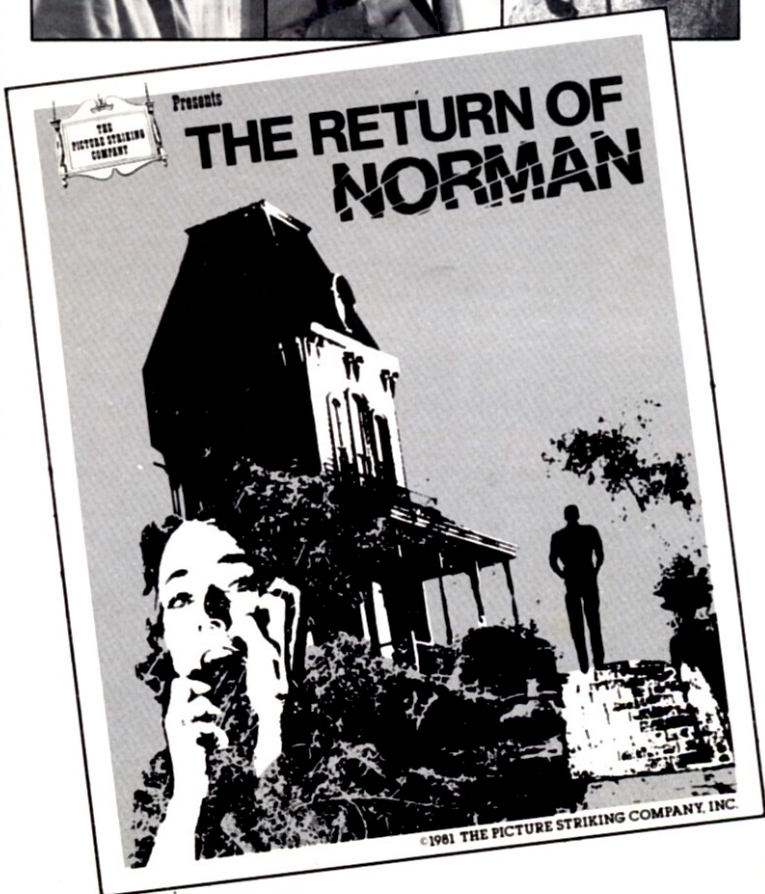
But Travis and January know what would really make the THE RETURN OF NORMAN special. The casting of key members of the original. Vera Miles, who played Janet Leigh's sister and Martin Balsam, who was killed in the first movie and will be resurrected as Bate's psychiatrist, Dr. Axelberg, have been approached. Even Anthony Perkins, who was typecast for years as a twitchy psychopath because of Norman Bates, has expressed interest. Travis and January offered Perkins the chance to direct the film as well as star in it. Jamie Lee Curtis—Janet Leigh's real-life daughter—was considered for the role of Crane's college daughter, but she reportedly thought the role was "dumb" and refused it.

PSYCHO is a phenomenon in our culture. Even today, some people have an irrational fear of taking a shower (causing Robert Bloch to comment, "I'm just glad I didn't have the victim on a toilet seat!"). THE RETURN OF NORMAN plays on this sort of pre-sold appeal that could make it a huge success, even if the script turns out third-rate. Travis and January are hard at work fine-tuning their screenplay in order to achieve their stated goals, but it remains to be seen if their copyright lawyers can give them the chance to make their movie. "We don't want to disappoint anyone," said Travis, "Mr. Hitchcock especially." □

Anthony Perkins

Martin Balsam

Vera Miles



THE HUNGER: MGM FILMS STRIEBER'S FOLLOWUP TO THE WOLFEN

In his second novel, *The Hunger*, Whitley Strieber does for vampires what he did for werewolves in *The Wolfen*. MGM bought the book in prepublication and signed Tony Scott, the brother of British director Ridley Scott, (ALIEN and the upcoming BLADE RUNNER) to direct. James Costigan, who won a Emmy for his adaptation of Henry James' *Turn of the Screw*, also has been hired to write the screenplay.

As in *The Wolfen* Strieber takes legendary characters and depicts them as a distinct and separate species from man endowed with traits indigenous to their kind. The result is a riveting, utterly believable tale. The story's central figure is Miriam

Blaylock, who is immortal as long as she has a constant supply of human blood (the word "vampire" is never mentioned in the story). She has existed almost from the beginning of history, in ancient Greece, as a citizen of Imperial Rome and as the witness to the roasting of her sisters as witches in the middle ages.

But over the centuries, Miriam and her kind have been growing scarce and she is forced to convert humans to her body chemistry in order to have some sort of companionship. Yet, while she lives indefinitely, her human lovers are unable to survive more than a few hundred years. Eventually, they suddenly

age overnight, consumed by an incredible "hunger" for blood. When the process begins in John Blaylock, Miriam's current companion, she turns her attention to Sarah Roberts, a young doctor on the verge of discovering the blood chemistry necessary for an indefinite lifespan.

The script follows the novel fairly closely, according to Whitley Strieber. "It's scary as hell," he said. "It's one of the best horror scripts I've ever seen. The ending is somewhat different from my book, but it's an incredible surprise."

The budget for THE HUNGER will probably be in the range of \$7-10 million, with complex make-

up effects needed in the aging of John Blaylock. Other effects call for a laboratory ape to suddenly age and decompose on-camera. Though no contract has been signed, Dick Smith is being considered for the makeup chores. Smith, however, has had several preproduction meetings with Tony Scott and producer Richard Shepard.

Catherine Deneuve and David Bowie are up for the leads as Miriam and John Blaylock and Susan Sarandon has been approached to play Sarah Roberts. A May 1982 start date is projected with location shooting to be done in New York and interior filming to be shot in England. **Paul Gagne**

FLICKS

A B-film satire from the former writers of 'Saturday Night Live' and GROOVE TUBE.

By W.R. Marshall

FLICKS is a low-budget satiric anthology spoofing the triple feature B-movie marathons that existed at third run theaters around the country. The film, slated for a Spring 1982 release, began under slightly unusual circumstances. "Basically," explains first-time director Peter Winograd, "it's my idea. But I play basketball with these other three guys, so we all got together, talked it over, and started writing."

Winograd's basketball buddies and co-writers are David Hurwitz, and Lamy Arnstein, both veterans of "Saturday Night Live," and Lane Sarasohn, part of THE GROOVE TUBE's writing staff. Together, working as Triple Features Productions, they concocted a blend of three 30-minute spoofs, a few coming attractions, and a cartoon featuring a Tom and Jerry-like cat-and-mouse duo.

The first featurette, "House of the Living Corpse," is a stab at old haunted house films. Martin Mull and Betty Kennedy star as young marrieds who buy an old Victorian House and, of course, discover the house is haunted. Only it is not haunted by a spirit, but by a demented "living corpse" (played by Ian Cuttaway) who for 15 years has been surgically removing his body parts and mailing them to his neighbors.

Next comes "Star Station 2110" featuring veteran screen actress Joan Hackett as the station's beleaguered captain trying to contend with unions on strike and constant mechanical breakdowns. "In other words," said Winograd, "space is like earth is now: everyone is bored." The highlight of the segment is an attack by



"Star Station 2110" part of FLICKS' triple bill, features Tang, the Tasteless, and his minions. The Clayman (left) is a prosthetic suit built by Magic Lantern Studio.

"Tang the Tasteless" an oriental villain in the style of Ming the Merciless.

The final feature is "Phillip Alien," a throwback to the '40s detective genre with Humphrey Bogart, only the private eye is a man-sized four-armed insect from another planet. Pamela Sue Martin stars as an oymologist who befriends Phillip. "One of the challenges of designing an insect," said Winograd, "is the fear everyone has for them. We had to design an insect that would be friendly, that audiences could sympathize with."

The cartoon is a spoof on the extremely violent shorts of the '40s and '50s. The generic cat-and-mouse duo live in a home for retired cartoon characters when they have an argument and start chasing each other in their wheelchairs. Directed and designed by Kirk Henderson of Colossal Pictures of San Francisco and animated by Mark Kausler, from a script supplied by Winograd and his co-writers, the full-animation short took six months to complete its four

and half minute running time.

The effects work—all the effects work, from the prosthetic makeup for the "living corpse" to the electro-hydraulic arms for Phillip Alien—was done by The Magic Lantern Co. The company was brought together by Mel Brooks for the "Jews in Space" segment of his HISTORY OF THE WORLD, PART I and has since done the effects for THE CREATURE WASN'T NICE and the T.V. film "MT. ST. HELENS."

With FLICKS, the company, led by its four principal members (project supervisor Anthony Doublin, Robert Greenberg, Bill Hedge, and Tom Payne), entered the realm of low-budget quickly-made movie-making. Fortunately, the preproduction time was an exceptionally long 12 weeks which helped Magic Lantern design the masks for Phillip Alien. Cheaply designing intricate special effects, including a full-length foam rubber suit for the Clayman (one of Tang's minions) and laser blasts for Phillip Alien's climatic shootout at

the Hollywood hills sign, wasn't easy. (Winograd never revealed how cheap other than to say the budget was "below \$10 million.")

Sometimes the effects are meant to look cheap. "For the 'Star Station 2110' bit," said Doublin, laughing, "we did all the establishing shots very formal . . . sort of 'STAR WARish.' Then Tang's ships attack. The whole technique becomes a take-off on the old 'Buck Rogers' serials. Tang's ships are flown on wires with pyrocharges in the back, spitting smoke, flames and sparks. Really tasteless."

A three-hour prosthetic makeup application was used for the living corpse, showing cut away and decaying flesh. "The living corpse's hobby is stuffing, skinning, and shellacking dogs," said Doublin. "We had to build this dog. In the script the girl comes home, sees it, and faints. We used a coyote's skull and it turned out quite well. The dog bit really caught on. It was supposed to be only in one shot, but the corpse wound up carrying the dog everywhere."

While the filmmakers were quick to praise the electro-hydraulic arms built by Magic Lantern (though they won't be seen in the movie), Doublin was more reserved. "They worked. But they never got used in the film. They got behind on the production schedule and we used a set of non-mobile arms."

Time wasn't the only problem on the set. "It was hot," said Doublin, "and this poor actor [mime Mitchell Young Evans] was wearing this vest to attach the arms, padding, fake shoulders for the fake arms, a striped shirt, tie, trench coat, gloves and the mask (constructed of latex and urethane with a layer of epoxy). To keep cool he took frequent breaks and we pumped compressed air into the mask."

With a slew of movie spoofs in production or release (THE CREATURE WASN'T NICE and THURSDAY THE 12TH to name two upcoming), Winograd was non-committal about his chances. "I can't say anything about the others," he said. "I only hope ours is funny." □

WORLD WAR III

For the February ratings sweeps, NBC gives us the end of the world—with station breaks.

By Kay Anderson

In **WORLD WAR III**, a four-hour NBC telefilm slated to air in February, a Soviet assault group seizes a section of the Alaskan oil pipeline, threatening to destroy it unless the United States lifts a grain embargo against Russia. For four tense days in the winter of 1987, the two superpowers waltz ever closer to nuclear holocaust, drawing closer to a *denouement* that no one wants.

The \$6 million dollar mini-series stars, on the American side, Rock Hudson (the President), David Soul (the colonel confronting the Russians in Alaska), and Cathy Lee Crosby (an American major). On the Russian side, Brian Keith plays the Secretary-General and Jeroen Krabbe (who won an Oscar nomination for his role in **SOLDIER OF ORANGE**) is the Russian colonel, Vorashin, leading the assault force.

Boris Sagal (**OMEGA MAN**) directed the production until May 22 when he was fatally injured. Sagal was struck by a helicopter rotor while shooting background snow scenes on the slopes of Mt. Hood.

Four time Emmy winner David Greene (director of **GODSPELL**, **SEBASTIAN** and **THE SHUTTERED ROOM**) was selected to replace him. "I was intrigued," Greene said. "Two small bands are fighting it out and a blizzard closes in so the support teams can't reach them. Meanwhile, the heads of their governments are arguing on the phone. Thus we get a hand-to-hand microcosm of the same situation that's also going on at an infinitely higher level.

"The concept of World War III is everyone's nightmare," Greene continued, "but there is one scene that everyone would like to have happen. The two colonels, The American and Russian meet on the field of battle

and both decide they're no longer enemies. They've done their job and now it's the politician's time to do theirs. For one wonderful moment it all hangs there, two sane men confronting each other and reaching out to the human being inside the uniform."

Principal photography was completed (a week ahead of schedule) last June at Zoetrope Studios. "We had to bring it in a week early," Greene said, "or it would have gone a million dollars over budget. I only had a week to prepare a four-hour movie, but I often make things up as I go along. I'm used to shooting from the hip."

Art director Bill Malley designed the single largest expense for the company: a \$500,000 snow set for the Alaskan exteriors. The set was built in a cavernous space created by removing the interior wall dividing soundstages three and nine. The craggy skyline and the Pipeline crenelating its way down a frozen valley were matted in during postproduction.

"Since there is a large amount of action taking place on a rather small set," said Malley, "it helps immensely that it takes place in the middle of a white-out. You just heavily fog the perimeter, which suggests an infinite cold emptiness fading away from sight. And it helps the feel of the action there... it's like jungle warfare in that you can be 15 feet away from someone and not know he's there. It's a helpless feeling."

The filming conditions were difficult. Scenes between the President and the Secretary-General during a secret meeting in Iceland were actually shot in a National Guard armory in the sun-baked San Fernando Valley at the height of a record-breaking heatwave. Temperatures in the building reached 105° and the overburdened air conditioners repeatedly blew all the fuses.

On the Alaskan set at Zoetrope, the



In 1987 a Russian expeditionary force invades Alaska to seize America's oil lifeline.

actors worked for five weeks dressed in full foul-weather gear and in a thick mist generated by dry ice and mineral oil. "Every shot had to be in a high wind and mist and snow," Greene said, "because the troops in Alaska are caught in a blizzard. We could only shoot about 30 seconds in a close-up before the sweat would be running down the actors' faces. The actors and crew were wonderful. They were really suffering, but they gave me everything I could ask for."

The blowing snow was plastic shavings, but the snow on the ground was a menace to flesh and equipment alike. "It's a mixture of salt, gypsum and white sand," said special effects man Howard Jensen. "The sand gets into your body crevices, to put it delicately, and scrapes your skin raw, then the salt eats in. Almost everyone had a watch ruined, and it was a constant struggle to keep it out of the guns and cameras."

This is no **BEDFORD INCIDENT** or **ON THE BEACH**, with the war remote beyond the horizon. While the heads of state are verbally fencing, the two small groups of soldiers are in direct confrontation. "One of the

most affecting aspects of this project," said Greene, "especially for me—I'm a life long pacifist—was the number of deaths I had to confront each day. Day after day, I was designing special deaths for actors, because I didn't want stuntman-type deaths. I recalled a photograph of a young soldier who had been shot unexpectedly, just as he came over a hill. I've always been haunted by the 'Oh no, not me' expression on his face. I was inspired by it and became very involved with that moment of death."

Writer Robert Joseph, a former Broadway producer who was also active as a writer and producer during television's Golden Age, considers the mini-series to be a contemporary update of Giraudoux's famous anti-war play, *Tiger at the Gates*. "In this play we see them moving, moving, moving, towards a war they believe will never happen," said Joseph. "That's what I wrote about—two civilized countries going through this *danse macabre*, this jingoism, this ridiculous dialog, never wanting war, saying it can't happen... then provoking each other to greater and greater excesses." □

CREEPSHOW: KING AND ROMERO COMPLETE FILMING IN PITTSBURGH

CREEPSHOW, the \$8 million dollar pairing of Stephen King and George Romero, has completed its principal photography at various locations in and around Pittsburgh.

Stephen King



The script consists of five original stories by King, geared to scaring your socks off, in the grand old tradition of E.C. horror comic books. "I've been in love with the idea from the moment Steve and I started to talk about it,"

Romero said. "I haven't really tried to scare people in this way since **NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD**."

"The Crate" serves as the centerpiece of the film, in which a janitor discovers an ancient crate containing a violent, ravenous little beast. Another published segment, "The Lonesome Death of Jordy Verrill," stars King (inset) as a redneck farmer whose land and person become inundated with a green growth when a meteor lands in his field. Of the other stories, "Father's Day" and "Something To Tide You Over" feature Romero's favorite undead: walking corpses; and "They're Creeping Up On You" brings to life the worst fantasy of

anyone with a phobia about cockroaches. The stories are linked together by returning in-between each tale to a discarded **CREEPSHOW** comic book, the wind flipping its pages as it lies in the gutter during a thunderstorm.

Romero and cinematographer Michael Gornick have given **CREEPSHOW** a unique, comic book style which emphasizes bright saturated colors in the lighting and mostly stationary camera angles suggestive of comic panels.

CREEPSHOW is something of a breakthrough film for Romero, a way of gearing up toward the film version of King's novel *The Stand* which he owns the rights to. The

budget is the biggest Romero has ever worked with and this is the first time any real "name" actors have appeared in his films. Hal Holbrook, Leslie Nielsen, Adrienne Barbeau and E.G. Marshall all have roles in the five stories. The film is also a breakthrough for makeup artist, Tom Savini, who is finally rising above the carnage of films like **FRIDAY THE 13TH** and Romero's **DAWN OF THE DEAD** to more rewarding and exciting makeup challenges.

Postproduction chores are now underway in Pittsburgh. United Film Distribution, **CREEPSHOW**'s financier, plans to release the film this summer. **Paul R. Gagne**

THE SECRET OF NIMH

What looks like Disney, sounds like Disney, but isn't Disney? A film by ex-Disney artists.

By Kyle Counts

Classical animation has been gone for a long time. Elements like lush backgrounds, special effects and character contact shadows are not seen even in the best of the animated features. But Don Bluth, president of Don Bluth Productions and director of the forthcoming animated feature, *THE SECRET OF NIMH* (rhymes with time), wants to resurrect them in his \$6.1 million production set for a June 1982 release. The film features the voices of Elizabeth Hartman (*A PATCH OF BLUE*), Derek Jacobi (*I, CLAUDIUS*), John Carradine and Dom DeLuise.

THE SECRET OF NIMH is a first feature effort by a group of 14 animators—led by Bluth—who walked out in mid-production on Disney Studio's *FOX AND THE HOUND* due to lack of creative control, a day Bluth refers to as "D-(for Disney) Day. It got to be that we couldn't be creative in the true sense of the word. The red tape, the bureaucracy, the chain of authority—everywhere you turned, someone was saying, 'we don't do that at Disney,' or 'that isn't what Walt would have wanted.' When we realized how difficult it was to grow in those confines, we decided to leave the organization."

"We" included Gary Goldman and John Pomeroy, partner's in Bluth's company and directing animators of *NIMH*. During *THE RESCUERS*, several artists began to feel the decay of the Disney system. "We were being trained to animate, but not to direct or do layouts or cutting," recounts Bluth. The group bought their own animation equipment and started experimenting. After five years they made *BANJO, THE WOODPILE CAT*, which they sold to ABC. The featurette showed to themselves and to potential investors that they were quite serious and capa-

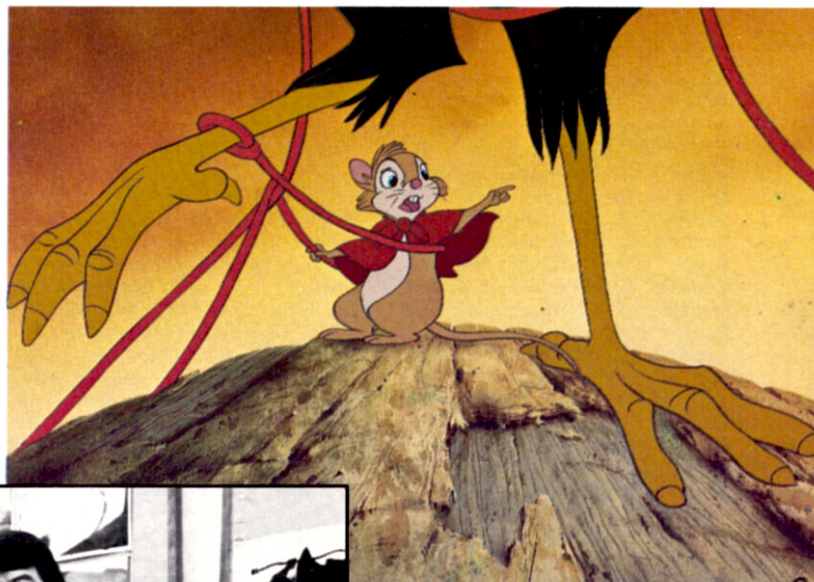
ble of doing a full-length animated feature.

THE SECRET OF NIMH was, in fact, first considered at Disney when a copy of Robert C. O'Brien's Newberry Award-winning novel, *Mrs. Frisby and the Rats of Nimh*, was circulated among the powers-that-be as a potential studio vehicle. It was greeted with an overwhelmingly negative reaction by just about everyone but Bluth.

The film will differ vastly from the



Above: Mrs. Brisby tries to untangle Jeremy, the crow, from a string he's collected for his nest. Inset: Don Bluth (left) Gary Goldman (middle) and John Pomeroy, maverick animators who left Disney to form their own company.



novel, according to Bluth. O'Brien's book is really two stories in one: the first about a widowed field mouse named Mrs. Frisby, who must move her children out of their cinderblock home before it is destroyed by a farmer's tractor. The second story concerns a supra-intelligent strain of rats which escape from their lab cages at N.I.M.H., which stands for National Institute for Mental Health, and seek their own self-sufficient Utopia before the farmer, whose land they

occupy, discovers they are stealing both his grain and electrical supply. Bluth's version combines the stories, the main thrust centered around the field mouse's plight.

Bluth, however, felt any title with the name "Mrs. Brisby" (Whammo had the copyright to *frisby*) would sound too "cutesy-pie," thus turning off potential adult patrons. "We don't want people to think we're making a children's picture," he said. "We're not. We are attempting to stimulate, on all levels, for all ages."

Certainly there will be moments of "cutesy-pie" in *THE SECRET OF NIMH*, but such sentimentality should be effectively counterbalanced by the film's darker tones. The audience will witness, for instance, the captured street rats' metamorphosis, through drugs, into an advanced breed of super-rodents. The camera will truck into the molecular structure of the rat's DNA, and show the DNA begin to change, culminating in a psychedelic light show.

The style of *THE SECRET OF NIMH* will no doubt reflect a strong Disney influence, but Bluth isn't bothered by the comparison. "Style was something that was set by Walt, and everyone will always give that to him," said Bluth. "He used a semi-realistic form, which allowed audiences to strongly identify with the characters. This is our form in *NIMH*. You create a form all its own

by burlesquing a human or animal."

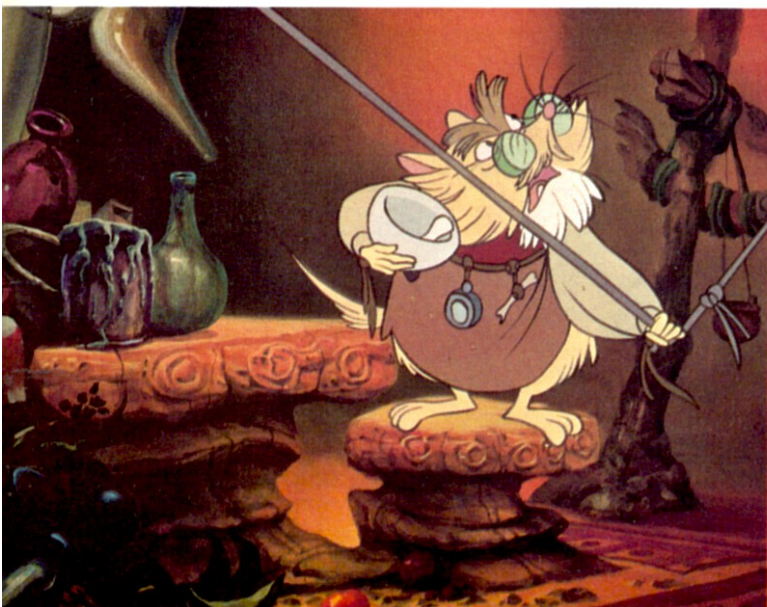
The feature film is not the only project on the the company's docket. 11 weeks were allotted to the creation of a two-minute animated sequence for *XANADU*. This decision increased the pressure of a late June release date for *THE SECRET OF NIMH* making long hours the norm. Now, it is not uncommon to find an exhausted artist catnapping under his or her desk. Such ten-minute refreshers are encouraged by Bluth, who, as an artist, knows how tiring it can be to sit at a drawing table anywhere from eight to 12 hours a day.

"That's why you'll find Don and John and myself the first ones here in the morning and the last ones to leave at night," said Gary Goldman. "We're running hard, and we want everyone else to run hard." Goldman feels that creating a tight-knit creative team at the directorial level is the key to a quality project. "At Disney, the storyman was responsible only for the story, and when it was done the director would determine if it worked for him. Here, the drawings come out of the director himself."

Bluth estimates that production is slightly behind the midway point, with another seven months of additional work to be done. The completed film will make use of some 6,500 feet of film, with over 1,000 background paintings and between 120,000 and 160,000 drawings for the film's 75 to 78 minute running time. Jerry Goldsmith, composer of the Oscar-winning score for *THE OMEN*, will write the music score, his first for an animated feature.

Bluth isn't all that certain he feels comfortable tagging *THE SECRET OF NIMH* as a return to the classic style of animation, saying, "I'd prefer to simply say that we're going to do our damndest to keep what I think is a dying art form from dying." □

Mad professor Mr. Ages pulls a string to start the gears in his underground lab.



SOMETHING WICKED THIS WAY COMES

Ray Bradbury watches his words come to life, as Walt Disney films his classic horror novel.

By Stephen Rebello

Ray Bradbury grinned broadly as he leaned against the corner of a turn-of-the-century building constructed for the \$16 million film version of his *SOMETHING WICKED THIS WAY COMES*. Amid the beautifully realized Green Town square, built on the Disney Studio's backlot, Bradbury watched intently as his words came to life.

"A multitude of hot and incredibly bright fierce eyes, the parade moved, desiring, but not quenching its desire. For the things it most wanted were hidden in dark. Jim and Will, under the cigar store sidewalk grille."

And there on the newly-constructed \$3 million set, the denizens of a dark carnival parade cavorted and menaced the spectators before director Jack Clayton's cameras. Elephants, masked midgets, a catatonic "Mr. Electrico" borne aloft by two sinewy executioner-types, a blonde-plaited blind girl resembling Sleeping Beauty and a skeletal giant all threaded past Crosetti's Barber Shop (a "Closed Due To Illness" sign in the window), a weathered church, and a tobacconist's. Streetlamps were plastered with handbills announcing *Cougar and Dark's Pandemonium Shadow Show*. At the head of the procession, nattily top-hatted and gloved, scanning the crowds for the two terrified young boys, was Mr. Dark.

When one of the starstruck pachyderms became a tad overexcited, director Clayton regrouped his actors and livestock for another set-up. "All of this is really spoiling me," Bradbury commented. "The other day, I saw one of the period cars that's being used for the film. It was exactly like the car my family and I came across the country in when I was a boy—even to the color. It's quite an experience."

Bradbury's frequent visits to the set are one indication of his pleasure at seeing the filming of his allegorical "moral horror story." But Bradbury is not the only one exuberant at the start of the project. Just beyond camera range, producer Peter Douglas (*THE FINAL COUNTDOWN*) is equally airborne. Four weeks into the filming, the film was just slightly under schedule and clipping along at an encouragingly brisk pace.

"It's a multi-levelled story," said Douglas, who is Kirk's son, "and contains so many elements of all our lives and our childhood. We're making a real attempt to film the environment as children see it. The two kids are the point of view and the story is theirs. If we can encourage audiences to believe that the carnival could really exist, in the same way Jim and Will believe it, then we'll have gone a long way in making a

successful film."

Whether Bradbury's nightmarish good vs. evil thriller could be made at Disney is another consideration. With its squeaky-clean image and financially disheartening track record, the home of Mickey Mouse seemed an unlikely place for a project that is anything but morally simplistic.

Yet Douglas insists the Disney organization hasn't made the slightest effort to homogenize the film. "Disney has supported us in making the best, most frightening film we can," said Douglas. "Of course they said, 'It's going to cost how much?'" But they've been absolutely behind the picture. For instance, we scouted a lot of potential locations for our small town in the film, but it actually proved more cost-effective to build it from scratch on the backlot. It gives Jack Clayton the latitude to shoot unrestricted from virtually every angle. That's important for the look and feel of the film. In the casting, too, it was always a matter of who's best for the role, not who was better known."

Douglas points to Clayton's casting choices as examples of Clayton's unconventional approach to the poetic material. The cast for *SOMETHING WICKED THIS WAY COMES*, mostly hand-picked by Clayton, includes Jason Robards, Jonathan Pryce (as Mr. Dark), Diane Ladd, Pam Grier, Scott Wilson, Royal Dano and James Stacy.

Blaxploitation actress Pam Grier (*SCREAM BLACULA SCREAM*) was an unexpected, atypical choice. "When we told the studio and the press we were casting for 'The Most Beautiful Girl in the World,'" Douglas concedes, "people thought we were talking about Bo Derek. Well, that isn't my conception and for the nature of this film, the right person would have to be someone more unusual and erotic. We were after someone hauntingly beautiful and that's what we got in Pam Grier. Her beauty is almost Egyptian." In addi-

tion to "The World's Most Beautiful Girl", Grier plays the Dust Witch and the fortune teller.

Another surprise was casting Jonathan Pryce in the splashy role of Mr. Dark, the ringmaster of the macabre carnival where a mirror maze traps its victims and a merry-go-round ages people both backward and forward. The role was once considered perfect for Peter O'Toole or Christopher Lee. But Pryce, primarily known for his stage work (he won a Tony for *THE COMEDIANS*), was Clayton's choice.

Clayton, noted for his adroit handling of actors in *THE INNOCENTS*, *THE PUMPKIN EATER* and *OUR MOTHER'S HOUSE*, had not done a film since the failure of *THE GREAT GATSBY*. "The studio was understandably concerned about his long seven year break in directing films," said Douglas. "But I don't think this is the kind of film that any talented director could do a good job with. It requires a really close relationship with the material. Sometimes a director so understands what a picture is about that he's the only person who's able to do it the way it should be done. This is Jack's vision, his point of view and he's living it. He's totally immersed in the film."

SOMETHING WICKED THIS WAY COMES' special effects and makeup chores, are being handled in-house. Douglas is among the growing number in Hollywood who are weary of showcasing the latest refinement in exploding heads and flashy special effects. "The *STAR TREK* movie," said Douglas, "was an example of going effects nuts. That's not what we want at all. We are going to amaze people because Jack's going for a point of view that is simple and terrifying."

"I think the most effective elements of the film will be the most simple," said Douglas, "the wind, the storm that finally comes and blocks out the sun, and the shadows. In the carnival sequences, sometimes the carnival is

going to be shown as just what it seems to be—people eating cotton candy, playing games, having a wonderful time. But the camera, the movie's point of view, will always know that there's something else going on.

"These things are tremendously more effective in connoting terror," continued Douglas, "than films where you're subjected to throats being slit. Not only do I think those things aren't frightening, but I also find them extremely unattractive. I was more frightened by *TWILIGHT ZONE* and *OUTER LIMITS*."

Reportedly, the film's effects will be done mechanically throughout with only a few matte shots. The film's carnival sequences will be filmed at the Disney ranch where an original carousel has been reconstructed. The surrealistic carousel sequences form one of the cornerstones of Bradbury's poetic meditations on life and death. The last thing to be finished was the town set which was a bit of a rush job. "I think we've done remarkably well," Douglas said. "I've been on pictures where the crew was still painting one side of the street while the director was shooting on the other."

Bradbury's eloquent, if somewhat ephemeral, screenplay for *SOMETHING WICKED THIS WAY COMES* has been "clarified and sharpened" in collaboration with director Clayton. The film is being lensed by Steve Burum (*ESCAPE ARTIST*). George Delerue (*JULES AND JIM, A LITTLE ROMANCE*) will provide the score.

"You know," Douglas commented, "I've got all these marketing people advising us not to use the words 'terror' or 'satanic' or 'demonic' in describing the film and they may have a point because those words have come to connote *THE EXORCIST* or *FRIDAY THE 13TH*, which our film is totally unlike. The level of terror in this film is very important, but it's true terror. By that, I mean waking at three in the morning and hearing a noise, walking down a dark hall and coming to a half-open door. You look into the room and see a shadowy, caped figure with a black hat standing in the corner. The split-second before you realize it's the shadow of a grape arbor or a coatrack, is the one where you think, 'Is it real or not?' This project has that quality. Sometimes, it's a tease and sometimes, it's not."

And sometimes, it's *SOMETHING WICKED THIS WAY COMES*. The film is scheduled for a Christmas '82 release. With Bradbury's estimated readership of 18 million, Douglas and Disney should have little trouble scaring up patrons to view this particular sideshow attraction. □

Ray Bradbury and producer Peter Douglas on the Green Town square built on the Disney backlot.



VIDEODROME: DAVID CRONENBERG'S WILD, WEIRD ATTACK ON TV

David Cronenberg's *VIDEODROME* began filming in Toronto, in mid-October, with the entire first week of shooting devoted to videotape. Principal 35mm photography began the following week. The film, which will star American actor James Woods (*THE ONION FIELD, EYEWITNESS*), is slated for a 1982 release.

The script, written by Cronenberg, has created tremendous excitement among its privileged readers. Despite the usual heavy securities surrounding the project, this very enthusiasm has helped the *VIDEODROME* crew to suffer some outrageous leaks; Rona Barrett actually reviewed Cronenberg's second

draft, nation-wide, on NBC-TV's *Today*. Barrett hailed the script as "a work of genius." Cronenberg has since completed a third script and expects to be polishing a fourth throughout his shooting schedule, perhaps to alter unavoidably divulged information.

Cronenberg will only go so far in describing his next film. "*VIDEODROME*," he said, "in an abstract way, is about sex and violence and the way we're affected by television. I don't think of it as a violent film; it deals with violence as a subject. James Woods plays a small-time cable TV hustler, who is forced to show bizarre, strange things on his cable station in order to compete

with the big leagues. Videodrome means 'video arena.' At one point, I have a character state that 'The battle for the mind of North America will be fought in the video arena—the Videodrome!' That will give you an idea of what the film's about, although it won't give you any idea of its *tone*."

Cronenberg promises that the film will be as daring and risky as his contract to Universal will allow him to be (he has been locked into an R rating). Cronenberg has rehired most of the Canadian crew behind his film *THE BROOD*. As an added bonus, Rick Baker has been signed on to create the film's top-secret makeup effects. "I'm not

supposed to talk about it," Baker said. "But I'll tell you something—it's *weird*. This is one of the weirdest films I have ever done. There are a lot of strange things."

VIDEODROME's \$5.5 million Canadian dollars, which is a lot less in American dollars, is Cronenberg's biggest budget to date, but he is optimistic that the investment is worthwhile. "Everyone who's read his script seems to find it very *au courant* and hip and New Wave and trendy," Cronenberg reveals with obvious bewilderment. "And that bothers the shit out of me because the film has nothing to do with *any* of that, as far as I'm concerned."

Tim Lucas

HALLOWEEN II

It wasn't shocking enough for John Carpenter, who stepped in to direct in postproduction.

By Patrick Hobby

The explicit violence of *HALLOWEEN II* is the most noticeable difference between it and its predecessor. All the blood and gore has led some to attack first-time director Rick Rosenthal as betraying the spirit of *HALLOWEEN*. But Rosenthal doesn't want to take the rap for it. According to Rosenthal, co-producer John Carpenter added a number of scenes of graphic violence to pick up the pace during postproduction. Scenes Carpenter directed himself without the presence or approval of Rosenthal.

Rosenthal was hired to direct the sequel on the basis of his 26 minute short film, *THE TOYER* (Carpenter and Rosenthal share the same agent and lawyer). *THE TOYER*, based on a short story and one act play by Gardner McKay, is a psychological thriller that keeps the audience guessing as to the identity of its murderer, slowly increasing the level of terror until it springs a climatic surprise at the very end. It has no violence.

"The script for *HALLOWEEN II* hadn't been written at the time I was hired," said Rosenthal. "I never had any input on the script. John and Debra [Hill, co-producer with Carpenter] had a certain direction they wanted to go."

During filming of *HALLOWEEN II* Rosenthal admits that the "Carpenter presence" was evident. "I often felt like I was a rookie quarterback replacing Ken Stabler," he said. "The first time in the huddle I say 'Red right 42 break!' and nobody breaks. The men look at me and say, 'Kenny never called that play.' Sometimes that was the situation. On the other hand, I tried to *make* the film appear seamless so that when they are run together, several years from now, you wouldn't feel they were shot by two different directors."

It wasn't until after principal pho-

tography that Carpenter took an active role in changing the film. "I have a lot of respect for John and Debra," said Rosenthal. "I am grateful to them for the chance to direct, but there are times I disagree with them. Debra is fond of saying I had a little different "vision" of the film. She implies I was the one who said we needed this type of close-up or this type of killing. If anything, they found my cut of the film too slow."

Three scenes were shot after Rosenthal completed production. Originally, Rosenthal planned the scream of a matron (who has a kitchen knife stolen by the Shape) to turn into the scream of the siren of a police car pulling up to the house of Jamie Lee Curtis. In postproduction, Carpenter inserted the knife of a girl (the first victim in the movie).

Carpenter's second scene, a linking segment, finds the Shape walking through Haddonfield's town square. A kid, listening to his radio, bumps into the Shape, who is heading to the hospital where Curtis is recuperating.

The third Carpenter-directed scene depicts the death of the hospital guard. Rosenthal had the guard go up to the storeroom, where Michael Meyers has broken in, but he cut it there. Later, Curtis discovers the guard's body. Carpenter added the brutal death scene where a hammer smashes the guard's head.

Carpenter also added a closeup of the Shape stabbing a needle into a nurse's eyeball. "I never would have shot that insert," said Rosenthal. "When the killer floats out of the black behind her, that's one of the scariest moments in the film."

Carpenter also snipped Rosenthal's work from the final print. One scene had the Shape duck into a room to escape detection, but he brushes against a mechanical bear that starts banging on its cymbals. The Shape hides in a closet while a nurse comes



Rick Rosenthal directs Jamie Lee Curtis and Donald Pleasence.

in to check on the patients. She leaves unscathed and Michael Meyers continues his pursuit of Curtis.

Hill and Carpenter didn't like the scene. "They asked me, 'What's the payoff? That scene is not scary, nobody gets killed,'" said Rosenthal. "I thought it built up a lot of tension. The film is a little predictable. Every time you see the killer you know he's going to kill. I hoped to create a little unpredictability. You never knew if he was going to strike. *THE TOYER* is slow, but it developed incredible tension. Sometimes you have to force the audience to wait.

"I was pretty pissed," said Rosenthal about the editing and the slight of not being asked to do the additional shooting. "They [Carpenter and Hill] didn't think the film was terribly good in the beginning. After the reshooting, we all sat down and patched up our differences. I think we

improved the film enormously. Part of the problem was the pressure of a Halloween release. There was no time to do a correct director's cut. The film wasn't assembled until two weeks before my cut was due and you just can't cut a film in two weeks.

"It was tough for John to be a director and not be directing," Rosenthal continued, "and it was tough to be a director and have another director producing. And Debra, who had worked as producer only with John, found it tough to work with a new first-time director."

Rosenthal is now busy directing a number of segments for a new ABC television anthology titled *The Darkroom* for which he also directed the pilot episode. "It is sort of a cross between *Night Gallery* and *The Twilight Zone*," he said. "The level of the writing is high and audiences are ready for this type of show again." □

QUEST FOR FIRE

2001's "Dawn of Man" sequence was just the beginning...

Preview by Jordan R. Fox

Who says Hollywood never takes a chance? Arriving in February via a long, circuitous, and rather tortuous route—much like the perilous journey undertaken by its principal characters—is the \$12 million 20th Century-Fox release *QUEST FOR FIRE*, one of the most ambitious and unusual projects to be sponsored by a Hollywood major.

With great fidelity, *QUEST FOR FIRE* chronicles the world of early man, approximately 80,000 years ago; in this respect it is probably a first. The film strives to present the conviction of a documentary within the dramatic context of a full-fledged adventure story. Its world is a harsh one, deep in the throes of an Ice Age. Although fire—a tool vital to continued survival—has been known to man for a few hundred thousand years, the knowledge is only of how to use fire and how to keep it burning. Of the different species of man then existing, only a few of the most

advanced groups actually know how to *make* fire.

One tribe, the Ulams, are decimated in a surprise attack by Neanderthals (the Wagabou), and the Ulam's fire is extinguished. Three of the tribe's best hunters now must be sent out on a desperate quest for a new source of fire.

The story behind the film's production goes back to 1977. Producer Michael Gruskoff (*SILENT RUNNING*, *YOUNG FRANKENSTEIN*) was in Paris as executive producer of Werner Herzog's *NOSFERATU*. There, he met Jean-Jacques Annaud, a veteran director of commercials who had won an Oscar for Best Foreign Film with his first feature, *BLACK AND WHITE IN COLOR*.

Annaud was interested in making a film based on the novel *Fire Wars* by J. H. Rosny Aisne, a classic book that has sold 20 million copies since it was first published in 1910. Rosny (Aisne signifies the "elder" of two brothers



who shared this pen name) was a contemporary of H. G. Wells, and is held in similar regard within France. But Rosny's novels have never been widely translated, and he is not well known outside his native country.

Upon learning of the proposed film project, Gruskoff was hooked. Annaud began work on a script, with frequent Polanski-collaborator Gerard Brach. While they worked on the initial adaptation and many of the basic concepts, Gruskoff began shopping around at the major studios. Only at Columbia did he find some interest, backed up by partial financing. Over the next 16 months, Gruskoff commuted regularly to Paris, as several script drafts were completed.

Annaud immersed himself in scholarly works, assimilating a voluminous amount of anthropological research to assure maximum authenticity. "We kept the main theme," Annaud said, "but doing the book as written would lead to much more of a

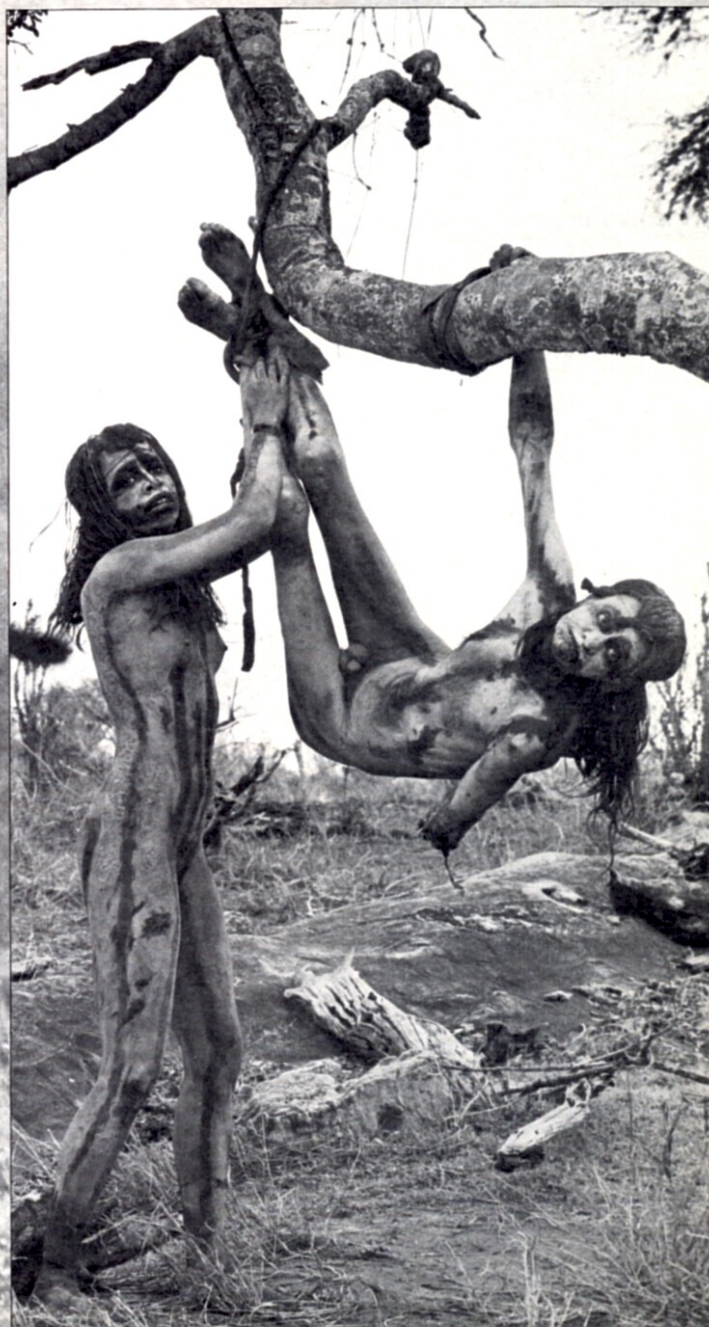
fantasy. Rosny was quite faithful to the scientific knowledge of his time, but much has been learned since then, and today his assessments seem rather naive."

Few film projects—even those of an obvious commercial nature—manage to survive the blows absorbed by QUEST FOR FIRE. A regime change at Columbia sent the project packing, and for Gruskoff it was back to square one. A deal was made at Fox, where the project somehow rode out three more successive changes of management.

Scouting commenced for authentic locations that would appear untouched by time. The search reached into remote parts of four continents. Annaud traveled to several major cities of the world, in a six-month casting process, seeking fresh faces and capable actors willing to brave grueling filming conditions. Chris Tucker (who later startled film audiences everywhere with his crea-



Ika (Rae Dawn Chong) is horrified when she discovers a fellow tribesman has been captured by the cannibalistic Kzammms (top right). Lacking Amana freezers, the Kzamm secure their catch to a tree (bottom right) so they can go back for another arm or leg whenever they get hungry. QUEST FOR FIRE is a brutal, realistic look at the dawn of early man.





A man ape from Kubrick's 2001.

CAVEMEN

From the sublime to the ridiculous.

QUEST FOR FIRE follows in a long—mostly disreputable—line of films devoted to prehistoric man. Once you get past mentioning Stanley Kubrick's brilliant "Dawn of Man" sequence for 2001: A SPACE ODYSSEY (1968), and a few documentaries done for television—most notably David L. Wolper's PRIMAL MAN—there isn't much left but embarrassment.

The genre has largely been the butt of comedies (like this year's CAVEMAN), which date back to the days of the earliest silent films. But even when they try to be serious, most prehistoric dramas end up provoking unintentional laughter, all the way from Hal Roach's ONE MILLION B.C. (1940) with its giant lizards, to the 1966 remake starring Raquel Welch. Like all the other Hollywood cavewomen, before and since, Raquel is just too cosmetic to take seriously.

20th Century-Fox knows it has a hard sell on its hands, what with no dinosaurs and no bathing beauties, and is promoting QUEST FOR FIRE as "a science-fantasy set in the distant past, an era as unknown and mysterious to us as the distant future."

John Richardson and Raquel Welch from ONE MILLION YEARS B.C.



tion of THE ELEPHANT MAN) was contracted to do the extensive makeup designs the film required, and anthropologist Desmond Morris and novelist/linguist Anthony Burgess were recruited as technical consultants.

Burgess compiled a basic language for the Ulam, suggested by ancient word roots. Morris contributed to the gestural side of early man's communication in the film, as well as depiction of behavior and emerging cultures. The anthropologist worked more from informed speculation than from hard facts, since the archaeological record of bones, tools and artifacts is highly suggestive—but only that.

But beyond doubt is the critical role that fire played in human evolution. Burgess cites anthropologist Claude Levi-Strauss' statement that "when fire was discovered, men and animals began to belong to two different worlds. Men were around the fire, and the animals were out in the dark looking at the fire and frightened of it." Beyond providing warmth, security and cooked food, fire made changes of habitat possible, fostered the development of language, advanced social organization and provided the key to most of man's technology.

Since the look of QUEST FOR FIRE had to be authentic, the makeup became an important consideration. Chris Tucker began makeup testing a full year before the scheduled start of principal photography. QUEST FOR FIRE presents four species of man existing at the same time in their own distinct climatic zones: early and late Neanderthals (the ape-like Wagabou and the cannibal Kzamm), and early and late Homo Sapiens, or modern man (the primitive Ulam, and advanced, fire-making Ivakas).

During the preproduction period, Annaud had his four lead actors (Rae Dawn Chong as Ika, an Ivaka girl who joins the three Ulam warriors—Ron Perlman, Everett McGill and Nameer El Kadi—on their quest) undergo several months of preparation in England. This included study of chimp behavior (chimps are the primate closest to man on the evolutionary track), the anthropological background to the film, body movements and training in mime.

Mime teacher Desmond Jones coached them through a series of exercises described as "chimping out." After mastering the "chimp," they worked up through a kind of evolutionary extrapolation, to reach the presumed Ulam level. The point was to achieve an appropriate body language and mind-set, and to have these become second nature.

In the course of production delays, the project lost makeup designer Tucker to other commitments, but more trying developments were in store. With location in Iceland arranged, leases and contracts locked in and much equipment en route, shooting was set to begin in late summer 1980, when the actor's strike hit. This was very nearly the *coup de grace*. "Still," Gruskoff recalled, "I kept telling Jean-Jacques that we're like the characters in the movie. 'Are

we going to let the flame go out, or do we keep on going?'"

The film could not proceed under the strike, except as an independent production with a waiver. Producers John Kemeny and Denis Herou'x came to the rescue with the Canadian film company I.C.C. Kemeny, and Herou'x had two weeks in which to line up new financing. With the Iceland locations lost, Annaud had to find replacements in Scotland and Canada. Fox would still distribute, but QUEST FOR FIRE went from being a U.S.-U.K. co-production to a Canadian-French co-venture. In accordance with the necessary deals and treaty provisions, the film now had five credited producers. Gruskoff agreed to take executive producer status, though he and Kemeny would be the actual producers of the film.

After a week of second unit work in Canada, seven weeks of main filming in Scotland got underway in November, 1980. As demanding as the film was organizationally, its location work was especially arduous—even for a producer. "We were shooting on the highest mountain in Scotland, climbing up places where I thought I would have a heart attack," said Kemeny. "But unless it was realistically tough—cold and hot for hot—it wouldn't be believable." Some of the locations were so inaccessible that the cast, crew, equipment and food had to be brought in by helicopter.

The actors may have thought they were prepared for harsh location conditions, but the reality was something else again. "It wasn't easy for them to perform nearly naked in the cold," said Kemeny, "while a crew of 70 people were bundled up around them, standing in front of heaters. Once they overcame the great physical shock, and determined that they wanted to complete this film, they slugged it out. They suffered a lot. Everyone did."

These were hard demands on actors, conceded Annaud, but indispensable in the service of realism. "If you don't have muscle strength in your arms," he said, "you'll look like contemporary man, who wouldn't last 10 minutes in this [the Ulam's] world. The way you walk on carpet with bare feet is not the way you walk barefoot over rocky ground, or over ice—the whole body balance is different. These hardships were not planned to make the actors feel miserable, it's to have everything look right."

When filming began in the U.K., most makeup responsibilities fell to the makeup department at Shepperton Studios. Canadian makeup artist Michele Burke was imported to apply the Ulam prosthetics (made from Tucker's molds) on the three Ulam warriors. Unfortunately the tie-on Kzamm masks made by the Shepperton unit proved too rigid for all but long shots, requiring later re-shoots in Canada, and Burke found herself drawn into a more prominent position on the film.

The Kzamm and Wagabou masks were perhaps the most problematical makeups to be mass-produced. During a three month hiatus in filming, Burke was asked to set up a lab in

Montreal, and to hire and train a large makeup staff in order to have them ready when filming resumed.

The makeup team numbered 30 people, possibly the largest such unit since PLANET OF THE APES. Workdays of 18 hours became standard in this frantic "hiatus" period, and stayed that way for the duration.

The Kzamm problem yielded to the same "jigsaw puzzle" technique of overlapping facial appliances as employed in the Ulam makeups. Yet the solution to the Kzamm close-ups was a great deal simpler than solving the daunting challenge of creating 18 Wagabou (ape-like neanderthals) virtually from scratch. No design had ever been finalized for the Wagabou, partly because Annaud remained uncertain precisely where on the evolutionary scale he wanted them.

Earlier, Burke had consulted with Dick Smith regarding the primal man he had designed for ALTERED STATES. She considered it the best-



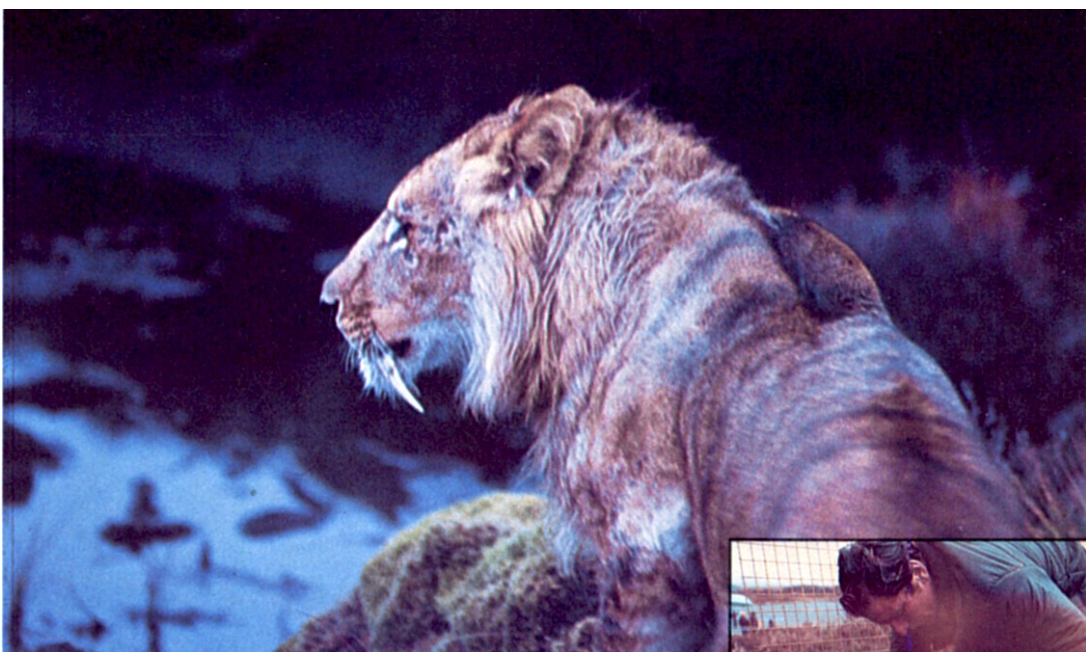
looking approach yet devised for such makeup. She wasn't surprised, but a bit dismayed, to learn it was a six hour job. "With 18 Wagabou plus 32 Ulams to do in the morning [for a battle sequence] it was already a 3-hour makeup job just for each face," said Burke. "To use Dick's methods meant spending all day in makeup and never making it to the set."

For reasons of time and trying to keep close to Annaud's original concept, the Wagabou design ended up being reminiscent of the bipedal apemen in 2001: A SPACE ODYSSEY. The head, face and neck were built up from a more intricate overlay of prosthetic pieces than that of the Ulam or Kzamm, with hair carefully punched through each appliance. "Every slight movement of the face showed," producer Kemeny said of the results. For the Wagabou bodies, the only practical answer was a conventional body suit, constructed over a spandex undersuit, but with the hair labor-

iously hooked through the body pieces, appearing to grow naturally outward instead of looking stuck on.

The world of *QUEST FOR FIRE* is a dangerous and violent one. Though the film doesn't dwell on violence, due to Annaud's observation that violence in nature is generally quick and decisive, there were a number of gore effects required. Burke was particularly experienced in effects makeup, so the spearings, split skulls, and severed limbs did not faze her at all. One such effect, an Ivaka's false arm stump (the arm had been eaten by a Kzamm), was made of a latex and dermo-wax shell stuffed with cotton and blood goop, then painted; it proved realistic enough to kill the appetite of a few crew members that day.

Burke's ad hoc makeup team was especially proud of their ability to reflect the identity of each character in the makeup. "I really enjoyed helping create a look, and to invent these



Left: Director Jean-Jacques Annaud (say an-know), whose work for *QUEST FOR FIRE* is a mix of documentary with speculative fiction. **Top Right:** The sabre-tooth tiger watches as dusk settles over the African savannah. **Inset:** Animal handler David Friedman works with a slightly stoned lion not too keen on becoming one of his prehistoric ancestors. **Middle Left:** Like a page from 2001, this Ulam warrior (modern man) faces a Wagabou, an ape-like neanderthal. **Middle Right:** An Ulam warrior (Everitt McGill) contemplates the wonder of the Ivaka tribe's new discovery: the making of fire. **Bottom:** Producer John Kemeny with one of the makeup-devised woolly mammoths on location in Scotland. **Inset:** Members of the Jimmy Chipperfield circus add the makeup, tusks and fur carpets.



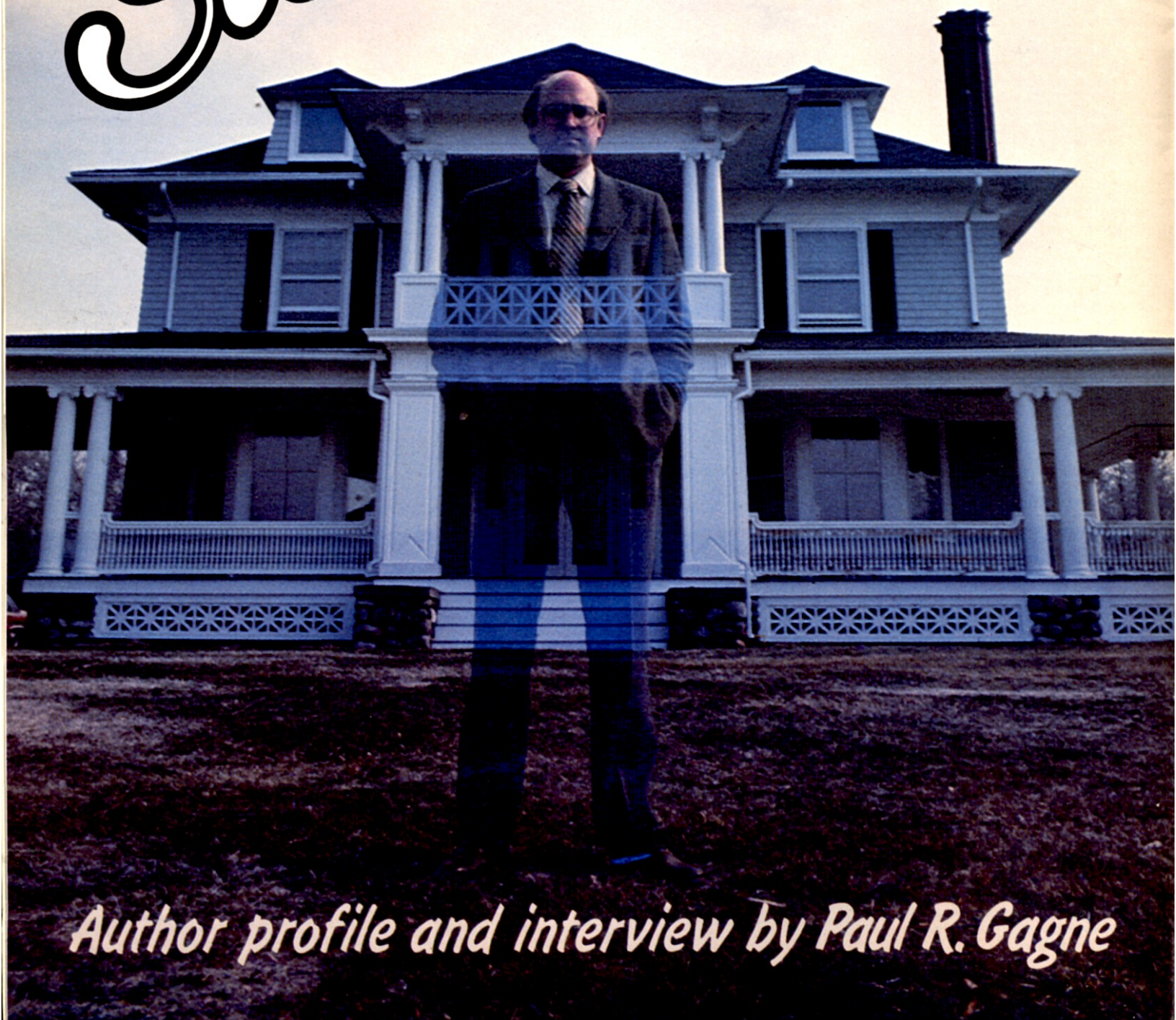
people Jean-Jacques wanted. They weren't just nondescript wild men running around. Each character meant a lot to him."

Ultimately, the film is intended to be more than an adventurous quest for fire. It records the benefits of knowledge gained from daring exploration, and the early stirring of human emotion; it seeks insight into who we are, by looking at where we've come from. Annaud and his producers would prefer the public to expect a drama rather than a documentary though they're sure any confusion over this point will be resolved once the film opens. "But there is in fact no conflict at all," insists Annaud. "The drama is deeply rooted in what we think the reality was. It seems people can not envision a story accurately set in this period. They can handle a cartoon, or that silly Raquel Welch movie, but they have difficulty imagining that we're doing something new." □



Ghost Stories

The Novels of Peter Straub



Author profile and interview by Paul R. Gagne

When a writer writes for the money you would expect his work to be standard, maybe less than standard. After all, the quick buck is mightier than the pen. Peter Straub admits he jumped on the horror bandwagon in 1975 for financial reasons rather than for the love of it, but in the past couple of years he has become one of the genre's most distinguished, well-regarded novelists. Most writers are lured to horror by the meaty advances and as a result turn out absolute drek. Few writers have come forward with earnest attempts to do something worthwhile. Straub is one of them. He has certainly developed a love for the genre during the past six years, giving us a wonderful blend of fine horror with fine literature.

Peter Straub's aesthetic ideas leaned towards poetry rather than trying to scare people when he began writing *Julia*, his first horror novel. Straub had received a Bachelor's degree in English from the University of Wisconsin and a Masters in contemporary literature from Columbia. Tired of teaching, Straub moved from to Ireland in 1969 with his wife, Susan. His plan was to write a Ph.D. thesis on D. H. Lawrence. Instead, he wrote a novel.

Marriages was published in 1973, and Straub describes it as an attempt at a "poetic novel" about a young American businessman and his mistress on a trip through France discovering what it means to be an American. *Marriages* met with little success, and Straub soon found himself in the typical situation of the fledgling writer: he needed money to live on. By this time, Straub had moved again, to England, and was doing book reviews "without any degree of passion," he said. *Under Venus*, a second novel he had been working on, was put on the back burner and he went to his agent. "What can I do?" he asked her. "Well Peter," she said, "why don't you make some money for a change and get yourself out of the pit? Write a gothic." Replied Straub, "What's a gothic?"

He took long walks on England's Hampstead Heath and thought up the idea for *Julia*, a gem of a modern ghost story. The plot concerns a young woman, Julia Lofting, who moves to an old house in the hope of escaping her dominating husband and the painful memory of her young daughter's death. The house, however, harbors the vengeful spirit of a deranged little girl who lived there years before. The plot twists slowly and uncovers a connection between the lives of Julia and the dead girl.

"It wasn't exactly my intention to write on that popular wave of acceptability," Straub said, "though I didn't mind writing on that wave. My plan was to do something that would give me enough of a foothold so that I at least wouldn't have to worry about getting a job for awhile. I wanted to do something that would be involving, scary and respectable. What

Peter Straub haunts the front yard of his Victorian home in Westport, Connecticut, which could easily pass for the setting of one of his horror novels.



excited me about *Julia* was that the idea scared me. The first time I thought of it, it really chilled me."

The publication of *Julia* in 1975 brought Straub's financial worries to rest "for a ridiculously small amount of money," he said. A moderate success with the novel rescued Straub from "an enormous psychological hole. I haven't been there since," he happily added. "After I wrote *Julia* everything changed. Publishers wanted me and my life improved. It helped me find a direction. It helped me discover what I was supposed to be writing about."

If You Could See Me Now, published in 1977, first occurred to Straub as a short story idea. Miles Tegarden returns to his cousin's Wisconsin farm after a twenty year absence. Ostensibly, he has come back to write a thesis on D.H. Lawrence (almost the same thesis Straub was working on when he decided to write novels, instead). His real motive is the fulfillment of a pact he made with his cousin Alison: in 1955, they swore to meet again in twenty years time at the farm. Twenty years have not changed the obsessive passion Miles feels for his cousin. The hitch is that Alison was killed one night in 1955 as she

and her cousin swam naked in a local rock quarry. Miles is suspected of her murder, although details of her death are hazy in his mind. Upon his return, Miles finds himself under suspicion again as several girls bearing a close resemblance to Alison are viciously murdered.

If You Could See Me Now is a first-rate thriller. Straub keeps the reader guessing as to who the real murderer is right up until the final, supernatural payoff. "There are a lot of deliberate red herrings in the book," Straub said "because I wanted to mislead the reader. I actually wrote three of four endings, some supernatural and some not." An ending which almost went into the book had Miles' cousin Duane, who runs the farm and actually did accidentally kill Alison in 1955, as the perpetrator of the more recent murders. "I gave that to the publishers, and they were happy with it," Straub said. "Then I went back to Hampstead Heath in England in the summer of 1975. I remember lying in the sun, thinking 'Jesus, this is a terrible cheat! I'd been working off supernatural emotions all the way through the book, and if I just turned into Raymond Chandler at the end, it's a betrayal. So I called the book back

from the publisher and rewrote the last eighty pages. I was much happier with it, because that's what all the emotion in the book had been leading up to—some kind of supernatural scare and supernatural solution."

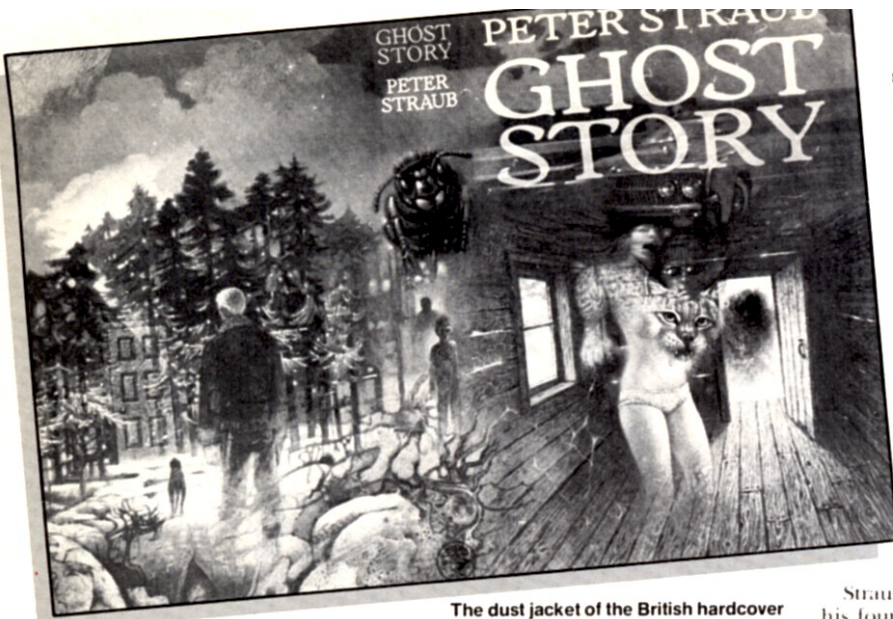
The book is a much richer ghost story than *Julia* in terms of plot, theme, emotion and suspense. Even the simplest aspects of the story, such as descriptive passages concerning the Wisconsin valley the story is set in, all carry some sort of emotional freight, a writing style that Straub is known for. "What occurs in the valley paragraphs should have a bearing on at least the emotional underpinnings of the story," the author said. "This kind of passage will probably foreshadow something. One thing I like in a book is when all the parts seem to relate. Something early on in the book might be echoed later by something else. Even words and speech patterns might be repeated later, as well as other little images. So the whole book is interconnected. I find that very moving when I read a book, so I try to do that when I write."

After *If You Could See Me Now*, Straub realized that he was identified as a writer of horror fiction. "I wanted to see what I could do with genre material," he said. "I'd begun to be intrigued by it in the same way I had been intrigued by it as a kid. I wanted to find out what horror was and what had been done in the field in the past. As long as I was a 'genre writer,' I wanted to be one of the best."

Julia and *If You Could See Me Now* are clearly stepping stones to Straub's mastering both the genre and his own style in *Ghost Story*. To prepare for telling the ultimate ghost story, Straub first took about six months to read every horror novel he could find. This included all of Lovecraft, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Henry James and some of the ghost stories of Edith Wharton, among many others. All of this reading is reflected in *Ghost Story*, particularly in the chilling stories the members of the "Chowder Society" tell each other. "There is a very honorable and respectable tradition of genre writing in our history," Straub said. "Most famous writers have, at one point, dabbled in it. In *Ghost Story*, I wanted to remind people of this."

The literary critics who continually refuse to take horror seriously could do with a bit of reminding, but Straub isn't concerned about what they think. "I had half enjoyed the feeling that the field I was in was completely disregarded by the tastemakers," Straub said. "Horror was thought of as a kind of bargain basement where you bought shoddy goods for little money. It seemed to me that this was a good opportunity to sneak in some good work. Felt that I could write at the top of my talent, and even though critics wouldn't notice it (because they never read the books anyway), sooner or later readers would come along and say: 'This is different. This is better written than most. Here's something that may be worth re-reading.'"

But what exactly constitutes a horror novel that is better written than most? "There is always something supremely stupid right at the heart of



"There is always something supremely stupid right at the heart of supernatural stories," said Straub. "The secret is to surround the essential image with a familiar context. Your people have to be as real as you can make them."

supernatural stories," Straub said. "The rational mind doesn't want to accept it. Yet, I don't think the conflict between the supernatural and the rational side of the mind matters at all. I don't think it matters any more than that the blues is an extremely simple musical form. All kinds of wonderful things can be done with blues, and all kinds of wonderful things can be done with the suggestiveness of supernatural events.

"I think the real secret is to surround the essential imagery with an actual context. Your characters have to be as real as you can make them in a setting as real as you can make it. They have to feel emotions that people really feel instead of invented, genre emotions. You need to try to examine your characters and have them examine their world in a way that's plausible and acceptable. I think that's the only way to make this stuff believable. And then, of course, you can't mess around with trying to justify it once it comes. You have to just lay it out there on the page as though you had every confidence in the world that it could really happen!"

With *Ghost Story*, Peter Straub found that the "classic elements" of the genre—in this case, walking corpses, shapeshifters, ghosts and the revenge motif—need not be handled with compromise or embarrassment.

"I wanted to make those things as big in body as I could make them without being afraid to be blatant with the scares," said Straub. "In the past, I had always been a little too

The dust jacket of the British hardcover edition of *Ghost Story* by artist Tom Adams illustrates some of the visual potential of Straub's novel that is being overlooked in the film version. The front cover and spine show the erotic image of spirit Eva Galli shape-shifting into a lynx and a wasp. The back cover depicts the waking dream cast over Lewis Benedikt who enters the doorway leading to a living nightmare.

"English Department-y" about this. I felt that you needed to keep things small and intense, but as ambiguous as possible. One thing that I'm grateful to Stephen King for is showing me you don't have to be that way at all. You can be as blatant and outspoken as you like and still get away with it!"

Another Straub trademark, fully developed in *Ghost Story*, are the intense, vivid dream hallucination sequences. Straub's fascination with dreams is evident as far back as *Julia* and even in a passage from *Marriages*. The "waking dream" sequences in *Julia* were particularly influenced by the dream scenes in Roman Polanski's film *ROSEMARY'S BABY*. Said Straub, "The color in them was very odd. It was the first time I had ever seen dream sequences that actually looked like dreams. Certainly, there are dream sequences in *Julia* in which I wanted to get the tone of these dreams in Polanski's film."

In *Ghost Story*, Straub's characters are constantly subjected to a form of psychological warfare that catapults them into situations where illusion, or dream, has replaced reality. For instance, the book has a scene (which will not be in the film version) in which several of the surviving characters go upstairs in the house that was once occupied by an older incarnation of the evil entity they are fighting. It casts them each into a separate kind of fantasy in which they must grope around and figure out what is happening.

"I enjoy that sort of thing," Straub said, "because it seems to me to have a strong emotional effect. It's like the feeling you have when you just wake up and you've had some kind of dream. You look around your room and it looks strange for a second. You're not sure what you're seeing or where you are. That happens to me all the time!"

One can imagine that Straub

might have had a similar disorientation when the imminent, overwhelming financial success of *Ghost Story* made it necessary for him to either leave England or pay astronomical taxes in the 95% bracket. "The accountants told us to go!" Straub said. "Practically every accountant I met on the street said, 'If you're Peter Straub, you'd better leave this country!'" Straub and his wife made a quick and expensive move back to the United States. They now reside, with their two young children, in a beautiful Victorian home in Westport, Connecticut that could pass as a setting in one of his novels.

Straub had already been at work on his fourth genre novel when he left England. *Shadowland* attempts to further exploit the illusion vs. reality scenes developed in *Ghost Story*. The story deals with two adolescent boys, Tom Flanagan and Del Nightingale, who are fascinated by magic. Del's uncle, Coleman Collins, is the world's master magician; the "King of the Cats."

Through a series of bizarre, beautifully-written incidents, the entire boy's school that Tom and Del attend gets sucked into some kind of horrible dream. The nightmare climaxes when the boys visit "Shadowland," Coleman Collins Vermont hideaway, to learn the secrets of the master magician. "The collector," a horrifying being, periodically emerges from a mirror to menace the two young heroes. Tom Flanagan's gradual discovery of his latent magical powers and his destiny as the next "King of the Cats" culminates in a showdown with Coleman Collins.

Just as *Ghost Story* reflects the work of Henry James, Nathaniel Hawthorne and other gothic horror writers, *Shadowland* draws heavily upon fairy tales, with the emphasis on the Brothers Grimm. "I knew from the start that I wanted to work on fairy tales," the author said. "I think they're the groundspring of a lot of writing. I liked them because they were primitive, but they're not told in a primitive way. They're retold in a simple way, but an extremely unexpected way. They're not managed in the way that a contemporary novel or story is managed at all. They turn funny corners and take enormous leaps. A character who was very important in the first half might not even be in the second half. I was also hoping to capitalize on the emotion in fairy tales, or the emotion that they inspire, especially in children."

Straub was particularly inspired by his young son, Benjamin, who was fascinated by fairy tales. As *Shadowland* was being written, Straub made up a batch of fairy tales for Benjamin. "I used a lot of those stories in *Shadowland*," he said. "In some cases, I used old fairy tales in the novel, but mainly I made up new ones. A couple of times, after I told them to my son, I wrote them down. I knew I'd be able to find a place for them in the book."

Bruno Bettelheim's book *The Uses*

of *Enchantment*, a study of the psychological undertones in fairy tales, was also helpful to Straub in developing the themes in *Shadowland*. "What I mainly got from the Bettelheim book was that fairy tales were often parables of the construction of the personality," Straub said. "They were about moving out of childhood with an adult self, and what fears had to be overcome and what internal dynamics had to be managed in order to, as a child, foresee the end of childhood." In *Shadowland*, much of the story's emotion comes from the rites of passage that Tom must go through in becoming "King of the Cats."

The structure of *Shadowland* renders it enormously difficult to adapt to film. Producers interested in the book have estimated that it could cost as much as \$30 million to film properly, a figure that has daunted most. "The novel's surrealism and its many flashback sequences far outdo those in *Ghost Story*," said Straub, "the flashbacks can be incorporated simply, as people telling stories." Straub is confident that an intelligent writer could work out the complexities in *Shadowland*.

The success of Straub's best-seller and the excitement of its transformation into a major motion picture has already resulted in the long overdue release of *THE HAUNTING OF JULIA* (see sidebar, page 17), a 1976 English film based on his first horror novel. "The first time I saw the film," said Straub, "I was very depressed. I was dismayed to discover that the material in the film didn't correspond to what I had written in the book." Straub is more objective about the film now, praising its "powerful beauty" and the strong performance by Mia Farrow in the title role. But he still has reservations, feeling the film should have been less subtle in favor of "big, big scares. It isn't especially scary," Straub said. "But a lot of people thought the absence of deep scares and sudden shocks meant that the film was several cuts above most current horror movies." Straub is not one to argue that point. "I don't approve of all those horror movies where teenagers are knifed," he said. "I don't think that's horror; I think that's something else." Trash maybe?

John Simon, who engineered the U.S. release of *THE HAUNTING OF JULIA* earlier this year, has since taken an option to film Straub's *If You Could See Me Now*. The film rights to Straub's second horror novel had been tied up for years by British filmmaker Jack Clayton, who directed *THE INNOCENTS* (1961), a remarkable movie version of Henry James' ghost story *The Turn of the Screw*. Clayton took on the assignment to direct Ray Bradbury's *SOMETHING WICKED THIS WAY COMES* for Walt Disney and let his option on the Straub property lapse.

"Out of all of Straub's novels, I thought this was the most cinematic," said Simon. The fact that the novel can be filmed at a reasonable cost was also attractive to Simon as a first-time producer. "It takes place in virtually one locale," he said, "there

The Haunting of Julia

Straub's success has uncovered a welcome skeleton in his closet: the shelved, 1976 film version of his first horror novel, Julia.

Rarely does a horror film achieve the subtle power of *THE HAUNTING OF JULIA*, to leave you quietly stunned as its last image fades from the screen. Based on Peter Straub's *Julia* and filmed in England in 1976 as *FULL CIRCLE*, the movie's muted, indirect approach to horror unfortunately doomed it to commercial obscurity.

Independently produced by Peter Fetterman and Alfred Pariser as an Anglo-Canadian co-venture, the film was the work of a young, new director, Richard Loncraine, and starred Mia Farrow as a woman who becomes obsessed with the spirit of an evil little girl following the death of her own daughter.

The film was released briefly in the summer of 1978 in both England and Canada, after festival screenings the year before at Cannes, and at Avoriaz where it was awarded the "Grand Prix de Films Fantastique" (the previous winner was Brian DePalma's *CARRIE*). The burgeoning success and reputation of author Peter Straub prompted specialty distributor Discovery Films to pick-up the film for U.S. release this year. Retitled to identify more closely with Straub (the original title *Julia* conflicted with the Academy Award winning film of that name starring Jane Fonda and Vanessa Redgrave), the release has delighted audiences who are tired of decapitations and endless streams of blood and gore.

Peter Fetterman, who is currently in America producing *YES, GIORGIO* for MGM (opera virtuoso Luciano Pavarotti's first feature), had little previous experience as a film producer when he read Straub's novel in early 1975. "It scared the shit out of me," he said. "I thought, 'God, this could make a wonderful movie!'" Fetterman's previous first feature was a small production called *NEITHER THE SEA NOR THE SAND* (4:2:34). Also a ghost story, based on a novel by Gordon Honeycombe, Fetterman had come across it while working for a book publisher and optioned it for a mere \$200. He picked up *Julia* from Straub for little more, about \$500.

Fetterman commissioned a first draft script from Harry Bromley Davenport, a young writer who had written a screenplay called *WHISPERS OF FEAR*. To help raise financing, Fetterman assembled an unusual preproduction package including musical themes, and photographs of the little girl he wanted to play the evil ghost child. Composer Colin Towns, a former keyboard player with Ian Gillian's band, came up with the music, a simple yet hauntingly evocative

blend of vocals, piano and synthesizer based entirely upon reading the script.

Unable to raise funds from English sources, by the winter of 1976 Fetterman headed for Canada. He met with Alfred Pariser head of production for Astral Bellevue Pathe, who worked as a producer on David Cronenberg's *THEY CAME FROM WITHIN* and *THE LITTLE GIRL WHO LIVED DOWN THE LANE*, starring Jodie Foster as a young murderess.

Said Pariser, "Fetterman went on and on. 'Not only is the script good,' he said, 'but the music is written!' My wife turned to him and said, 'I'm not a film producer, but I always thought that you write the music after the film!'" It was no laughing matter, however, when Fetterman played Towns' moody score. Its sad, melancholy themes evoked a clear vision of the kind of horror film Straub's chilling ghost story would make.

Pariser was sold on the project, and by summer Astral Bellevue Pathe had raised two-thirds of the film's \$1 million budget. "Now I take cassettes of music and pictures of little girls wherever I go!" laughed Fetterman. The film was to be made on the Anglo-Canadian production treaty, with investment for tax shelter purposes, which meant that filming had to be completed by December 31st.

Fetterman returned to London to raise the remaining third of the budget and to hire a director, cast and crew. Director Richard Loncraine heard about Fetterman's project and arranged to meet him. He was soon hooked, "What attracted me more than anything

else was the music," said Loncraine. "I could immediately see a film there."

Fetterman hired Loncraine, who had just come off a frustrating 18 months directing Harry Saltzman's *THE MICRONAUTS*, seeing the project collapse. Loncraine had directed *FLAME*, a semi-documentary feature starring the rock group Slade, and had begun directing at age 19 with television shorts for the BBC (78 films for a science program called *TOMORROW'S WORLD* over a two year period).

Fetterman's Canadian financiers were adamant about having a "name" actress in the role of Julia. Shortly after hiring Loncraine, in July 1976, Fetterman approached Mia Farrow, who hadn't made a film since Jack Clayton's critically disastrous *THE GREAT GATSBY*. "She sensed that Richard and I were very committed," said Fetterman. "We were very persistent. In the end, I think she just gave in and said, 'Okay, okay, I'll give you seven weeks! Just leave me alone!'" Since the filming was to take place in London, it didn't involve a move for Farrow, who could stay with her family. But it wasn't their persistence or the convenience of the location that convinced Farrow to do the film. According to Loncraine it was the music.

Tom Conti, who worked with Loncraine on *FLAME*, and who recently won a Tony award for his lead part in the Broadway smash "Whose Life Is It, Anyway?" was cast as Julia's friend Mark, who gently tries to bring her back to reality after her daughter's death.

Three weeks before the start of principal photography, in October,

eight thousand dollars for the first payroll failed to materialize from Canada. According to Pariser, Harold Greenberg, president of Astral Bellevue Pathe, simply refused to write the check. Fetterman flew to Canada with his lawyer, and over the course of a frantic weekend managed to negotiate Astral Bellevue Pathe out of the picture for failing to honor their contract. Fetterman met with Julian Melzack, Astral's chief investor and a former Oxford Don, who'd become involved with the executive end of the film industry. Melzack agreed to re-finance the film on the condition that Pariser serve as co-producer. Fetterman accepted the terms. "We'd put so much effort into this film," said Fetterman, "it was better getting it made with ninety-five chinese producers than not to have it happen at all."

But Fetterman's troubles did not end with the refinancing deal. Next weekend, on the Friday night before Monday's shooting was to begin, *ROSEMARY'S BABY* was shown on British television. Late at night, after the movie, Fetterman received a frantic call from Mia Farrow, who had apparently been shaken up at the thought of doing another "occult" film. "It was hysteria," Fetterman recalled. "I said, 'What do you mean you can't do the picture? I've got eighty people committed to start work on Monday!'"

Fetterman met with Farrow the following morning and managed to talk her around. "She was very nervous and very dazed," said Fetterman, "but after the first day of filming she was amazing." Few who have seen the film would disagree that she was perfect for the part. It is virtually impossible to conceive of the film without her. "She's a skillful technician," said Loncraine. "She had an understanding of film, and what we were trying to do with mood."

Loncraine surmised that Farrow may have had second thoughts about the script, which he had just spent a hectic week rewriting with another *FLAME* alumnus, screenwriter Dave Humphries. "I didn't like the book at all, to be honest," said Loncraine. "there were just too many coincidences for me. Too many conveniences for me. It was piled on and on." Rather than tell a straightforward gothic thriller, Loncraine opted to make the supernatural elements of the story ambiguous, never directly showing them to his audience.

"I saw *THE OMEN* two or three times, and people enjoyed it, but it wasn't creating fear," said Loncraine. "They knew it was hokum. People were laughing at it. I didn't

Julia (Mia Farrow) is aroused in her sleep by the touch of ghost child Olivia.





Straub's *Julia* was retitled to tie in with the film's 1978 British/Canadian release.

want to make a film that people would laugh at. I wanted to create the type of fear that makes the back of your neck shudder when you walk up into an old building. You know the expression: 'You felt like somebody walked over your grave.' Genuine, strange fear out of really quite normal events."

Harry Bromley Davenport's original script stuck fairly close to the book and needed to be completely rewritten to accommodate Loncraine's concept. Playing a cassette of Colin Towns' ethereal music, Loncraine and his scenarist roamed around Holland Park in London, scouting locations and discussing the story. Fetterman had already been persuaded by Loncraine and Farrow not to make a straight horror movie. "They felt that the increased ambiguity would enchant the quality of the film," said Fetterman, "and make it more challenging."

Humphries wrote the new script in six days and six nights. "Richard locked me in his room," said Humphries, "and I did it there. I didn't want to disturb the children so I didn't use a typewriter. I actually wrote it in long hand."

The first of two key changes Loncraine and Humphries made in Straub's novel was that Magnus, Julia's husband, would no longer be the father of Olivia, the ghost child. In the novel, this revelation comes as a complete shock, about halfway through. In part, the change was necessitated by the casting of Keir Dullea, who is much younger than the Magnus Straub depicts in his novel.

Under the terms of the Anglo-Canadian co-production treaty, a Canadian star *had* to be in the picture. "There were two Canadians who could have played the part of Julia's husband," said Alfred Pariser, "Len Cariou and Keir Dullea. In 1976, no one ever heard of Len Cariou." (In Alan Alda's *THE FOUR SEASONS*, Cariou plays the middle-aged divorcee who finds new vitality in a

younger woman.)

The other major change drastically altered the structure and pace of Straub's novel. Rather than revealing Julia's guilt in her daughter's accidental death as a final, shocking explanation for her "haunting," the film *opens* with the horrifying scene. Julia performs a makeshift tracheotomy on her suffocating daughter with a kitchen knife. Loncraine considered the scene the linchpin of his story. Starting with an image of Julia, covered in blood and clearly out of her mind with horror, Loncraine then descends into a subtle, evenly-paced exploration of a question only hinted at in the novel: is Julia really haunted by a ghost or has her daughter's bloody death driven her to madness?

One theme in Straub's novel that appealed to Loncraine was Julia's twisted sexuality. In the book, Olivia's ghost violently stimulates Julia to orgasm during a sort of waking dream. As the scene is presented in the film, a child's fingers caress Julia as she stirs with pleasure in her sleep. "There was a double edge to it," said Humphries. "Whether or not it was Julia's own disturbed mentality finding some sort of psycho-sexual release or actually the ghost possessing her." A later scene shows Julia lying in a daze with her own hand repeating the same movements.

The mildness of the psycho-sexuality in the film, compared to the novel, was probably the result of Farrow's own reticence to deal with the subject. "I said the word psycho-sexual," said Humphries, "and she seemed to take about sixteen paces backwards! I tried to explain we were dealing with a sexually disturbed lady, so any sexual act would have psychological undertones. But she seemed to shrivel at the idea and wouldn't talk about it. I think Richard wanted the scene to be a little stronger."

Loncraine shot *THE HAUNTING OF JULIA* in Panavision, which seems an odd choice for a story that's largely made up of interior shots and uses claustrophobia and walls to create mood. "I like the shape of Panavision," Loncraine explained. "It is a shape that works very well, particularly, for one person, face or figure ranged left or right within the frame. The empty space, the environment, becomes another actor in the play. Normally, if Mia Farrow was playing a two-shot, you'd have her on the left and another actor on the right. Often, we had Mia on the left and the room on the right, so the room and the atmosphere became her co-star."

The film's visual style was enhanced by using what Loncraine calls the "evolving master," a technique commonly used on a hectic production schedule when precious time can be wasted in setting up and lighting for close-ups, over-the-shoulder shots and reaction shots after the basic master shot is taken.

"The actors are choreographed in conjunction with a subtle, almost imperceptible camera move," said Loncraine. "Rather than cutting to them in a close-up, they walk towards



Above: Julia finds Olivia (Samantha Gates), the ghost child, waiting for her at the end of *THE HAUNTING OF JULIA*. Inset: The final shot is rehearsed (l to r) Peter Hannan, cinematographer, Mia Farrow, Anthony Way, assistant director, and Richard Loncraine, director. Right: The camera rests on Julia, at peace.



the camera into a close-up. It might take you three or four hours to rehearse and two hours to light, but when you do the scene, you cover maybe two to four minutes of dialogue or a sequence."

One scene that involved another form of "choreography" was Julia's first encounter with the old Holland Park house she moves into. Loncraine carefully choreographed Julia's exploration of the house to Colin Towns' music. "Colin has a lot to answer for in the success of this film!" said Loncraine. "We wanted to make it very balletic, using a moving, floating camera, drifting with her through this building. We called the scene "the awakening." I think it's my favorite sequence!"

The final murder and death sequences in the film all exhibit Loncraine and Humphries' "double edge," right up to Julia's own death at the end of the film. It is unclear whether Julia is acting out Olivia's revenge as a result of her own madness or if the ghost is actually acting

through Julia.

After the ghost's mother (wonderfully portrayed by Cathleen Nesbitt) dies of fright upon seeing her daughter's eyes in Julia's stare, Julia returns to the house to find Olivia waiting. Or is it one of Julia's delusions? They are never in the same frame together. Julia beckons to the child with open arms holding her own daughter's toy clown, gently assuring Olivia that everything's alright. The camera begins a slow dolly around the back of the chair Julia sits in, and as the screen fills with the dark back of the chair we hear the delicate clink of the toy's cymbals. The camera completes the circle to reveal Julia's throat slashed open, blood flowing freely down her neck, and visible on the sharp edge of one of the toy's cymbals.

"I did a documentary years ago on suicides," Loncraine said, "and the frightening thing, the *strange* thing about suicide is that it's *not* an act of desperation, it's a solution. It's a dawning of the light. For Julia, it was a sudden comprehension of how it



could be all solved by killing herself, or, if you like, by being killed by the child. Either way, she finds her child and her solace."

The closing shot was achieved by about fifteen hours of painstaking special effects and camera work. Although the shot looks like one continuous dolly around the chair, the camera was actually stopped halfway. Makeup artist Dickie Mills rigged Farrow with latex appliances and high-pressure pumps to create the open, bleeding wound on her neck, and the camera completed the shot. Filming the scene turned out to be particularly distressing for Farrow, who sat through several takes with a constant supply of "blood" pumping into her lap. "When she got up," said Alfred Pariser, "the blood just poured all over her. I mean, it was scary!" According to Loncraine, Farrow took leave of the set. "She disappeared for four hours," he said, "and was running around somewhere in the streets of London. She was very upset."

Loncraine didn't consider the blood a shock effect but an integral part of the mood of the film. "With Colin Town's music and Peter Hannan's photography, the blood in the film is no longer blood, really," said Loncraine. "It's a soft, strange, lyrical, flowing, warm substance. Quite

sinister, but not in the usual way. It doesn't fly across walls; it slowly, slowly seeps across floors."

Ultimately, **THE HAUNTING OF JULIA** is a very personal film for Loncraine. His imprint extends from the changes he made in the script to the toy clown used for Julia's murder/suicide, which he created himself (Loncraine owns a lucrative, \$4 million-a-year adult toy-manufacturing company), to his state of mind. Loncraine was miserable during filming largely because of the pressures imposed by the short shooting schedule.

"I was clinically depressed after working a year and a half on **THE MICRONAUTS**," he said. His emotional low substantially influenced the unrelentingly sombre tone of **THE HAUNTING OF JULIA**. "A lot of time the depression was having to go on," he said. "Waking up every morning and knowing you couldn't run over on the film by even two days. I don't think I could make that film anymore. I'm too content now."

Loncraine is currently developing a feature called **BRIMSTONE AND TRECACLE** from a script written by Dennis Potter. The story concerns a bizarre character, played by Sting, the lead singer of the New Wave band "The Police," who may or may not be the devil. □

"I actually consider the central idea the most unimportant part of a horror novel," said Straub. "I always discover the idea when I'm about halfway through, only a short time before the book's character's find it! By then I've usually been writing a year."

are no huge special effects involved, and it's got a suspense and a pacing that I think is just marvelous."

Simon has interested Alfred Sole to direct, and the two will collaborate on the screenplay. Sole directed **COMMUNION** (aka **ALICE, SWEET ALICE**), in which he gave young Brooke Shields one of her first acting jobs. Shields is being courted for the pivotal role of Alison, the murdered cousin, a part that would be expanded for her from the book.

Meanwhile, Straub is busy at what he considers "a lot more fun" than worrying about film projects: writing a new novel. *Floating Dragon* will deal with some sort of mass insanity affecting Straub's home town of Westport, Connecticut. Those familiar with this elite community may argue that it already has its own form of mass insanity, thank you. "What happens to my poor characters is even more bizarre than the ordinary consumerist insanity that prevails in Westport!" Straub laughed.

Floating Dragon will be followed by the collaboration of Straub with Stephen King, his friend and a fellow New Englander, on a novel called *The Talisman*, an odyssey involving a character Straub describes as a "walking curse. Almost everyone who meets up with him comes to some sort of a terrible end," he said.

The story concerns the character's trek across America and back again. "I'm not interested in writing Tolkien-ish fantasy," Straub said, "but this has elements that are like that. It has that kind of atmosphere. I think this is the first time anybody has ever

tried to put that together with horror."

Straub and King plan to develop a detailed outline together and then go off to their respective homes in Westport and Bangor, Maine to write the novel, using linked word processors to ease communication. "Steve's information will come to me and mine will go to him," Straub said. "That way, we can each keep up with what the other's doing. I think it's time to accept the technology that's there."

Straub and King together could be pure dynamite, and *The Talisman* has already raised a few eyebrows in the film world. "I think it's going to be a very special project," Straub said. "I feel very good about it."

Straub also feels very good about writing horror in general, and plans to keep at it. Yet, with the fairly limited range of story ideas, a writer must constantly strive to do something special. "I actually consider the idea," said Straub, "the most unimportant part of a horror novel. I always discover the idea when I'm about halfway through. Then I discover the real secret of the novel only a short time before the characters do! I find that everything has led up to it, and I should have seen it earlier because it has certainly been there, but it only hits me when I've been working on a novel for about a year."

"There are a few conventional horror themes, or movements, that crop up again and again: vampires, witches, satanism and things like that. In bad horror novels, those things are foremost. That's how you describe them: It's a vampire novel. Chances are, unless it's *Salem's Lot* that you're talking about, it's a really bad book. The richness in this field comes in the way that these themes are handled.

"The more I try to work with this kind of material, the more I discover what can be done with it," continued Straub. "I've begun to think that there isn't anything that can't be done with novels of this kind. As long as you have enough imagination, you can push this extremely peculiar material in almost any direction you want to go. It's a bottomless well, actually, in which you could swim down and find new directions for as long as you continue to write." □

Peter Straub with various editions of his bestselling horror novel **Ghost Story**.



Ghost Story

From Novel To Film

It's no secret that horror is big business. And it's not much of a surprise that most of the horror novels that have crowded supermarket book racks in recent years are strictly low-class trash, churned out quick 'n dirty by authors looking for—and generally getting—a fast and easy payoff.

But Peter Straub's *Ghost Story* was different, standing head and shoulders above the pack. Meticulously crafted and brilliantly structured, author Stephen King has called it "probably the best of the supernatural novels" to be published in the wake of *Rosemary's Baby*, *The Exorcist* and *The Other*, three phenomenally successful books that inspired literally hundreds of imitators.

It wasn't so much that Straub had developed a new *idea* to terrify readers—the plot and situations are pretty standard gothic horror conventions—but his novel had a certain style, a *patina* that few other books in his field could match.

The book received attention

before it was even published in hardcover. Thom Mount, head of production at Universal, and Marianne Moloney, a newly appointed Universal production executive with experience in publishing, both read galleys of the Coward, McCann & Geoghegan edition and became overwhelmingly enthusiastic about the book's potential as a film. On the same day in October, 1978 that Pocket Books paid \$792,000 for the paperback reprint rights, Universal put down \$225,000 of its own and bought the property.

As far as Hollywood was concerned, *Ghost Story* had a little of everything: violence, suspense, sex, ghouls, apparitions, marital infidelity and mutilated animals—not to mention a quartet of juicy roles for a few of the industry's elder statesmen. But how to bring it all to the screen? Adapting even the simplest of novels is never easy, and even then the results are seldom artistically satisfy-

Article by Paul R. Gagne

Additional interviews by Kyle Counts, Bill Kelley, Mike Childs & Alan Jones





Left: Alice Krige as the sensuous, ghostly Alma Mobley/Eva Galli, standing serenely in front of an onrushing car driven by John Houseman (see page 30). Eva Galli also appears in several less-appealing forms during the film: horrific apparitions designed by Dick Smith that literally frighten people to death. Right (from top): a "bridge apparition" that sends Douglas Fairbanks, Jr. falling to his death; a "nightmare apparition" designed for the death scene of Melvyn Douglas, but scrapped during editing (see page 35); Eva Galli's corpse, buried in a sunken car for 50 years; Galli's skull, the flesh slowly disintegrating, a sign that her spirit is laid to rest (see page 39). This shot features Alice Krige's face superimposed onto the head (note the prominent eyes), an optical effect by Peter Kuran that was eliminated from the final print during editing.





Falling for Alma Mobley

Craig Wasson does it safely, thanks to Albert Whitlock's blue screen.

Early in the film, David Wanderley finally sees what his fiancée, Alma Mobley, *really* looks like [see page 37]. He is so frightened by the apparition that he falls to his death through the window of his 29th floor New York apartment (**above**).

Visual effects supervisor Al Whitlock worked with effects veteran Mel Arnold to film the sequence. Arnold and a five-man crew spent six weeks building the miniature set, which included two apartment towers, the skylight, the street and the cars below. The miniature was positioned on its side and shots were taken from street

level (looking up) and the 29th floor (looking down).

Whitlock filmed Craig Wasson in front of a large blue screen backing, directing the actor to wave his arms about (**left**). Whitlock simulated the fall by quickly pulling the camera back, making Wasson appear smaller in the frame. For shots of Wasson falling *towards* the camera, the camera was also pulled back quickly, but with the footage printed in reverse. This insured that Wasson would not be hurt if the camera came in too close or too hard.

Footage of Wasson was taken in

various orientations to allow his image to be composited with various views of the miniature (**top; below right**) and with a photographic plate of a real New York high rise (**below left**). For some shots, Wasson stood on one leg while flailing about, grasping a strap attached to the rafters for balance.

To make Wasson's "fall" seem more realistic, Whitlock threw the background out of focus as his image grew larger, simulating the focus change that would have been required had Wasson's body actually plunged towards the camera from such a height.



Cast & Credits

A Universal release. 12/81. In color. 108 mins. Directed by John Irvin. Screenplay by Lawrence D. Cohen. Produced by Burt Weissbourd. Based on a novel by Peter Straub. Cinematographer, Jack Cardiff. Makeup Illusions by Dick Smith. Special Visual Effects, Albert Whitlock. Coproducer, Douglas Green. Editor, Tom Roll. Art Director, Norman Newberry. Music by Philippe Sarde. Costume Designer, Mary Routh. Visual Consultant, Michael Seymour. Casting by Mike Fenton and Jane Feinberg. Associate Producer, Ronald G. Smith. Set Director, Mary Ann Biddle. Assistant Art Director, Jim Allen. Music Coordinator, John Caper, Jr. Music Orchestrated & Conducted by Michael Mention. Music Recorded by Mickey Crofford. Unit Production Managers, Ronald G. Smith and Robert Latham Brown. First Assistant Directors, Dan Kolsrud, Phil Bowles. Second Assistant Directors, Jan DeWitt and Dean Lyras. Sound Mixer, Jim Alexander. Sound Re-Recording, Robert L. Hoyt. Supervising Sound Editor, Charles Campbell. Sound Effect Editors, David Pettijohn, Rick Franklin, Larry Carow, Sam Crutcher. Assistant Film Editor, Michael Rippas. Matte Photography by Bill Taylor. Camera Operators, Lou Barlia, Dick Minglowe. First Assistant Camera, Jack Brown, John Ercole. Second Assistant Camera, Bob Brown, Pat Capone. Makeup, Bob Jiras, Albert Jeyte, Rick Sharp, Irving Buckman. [Special Effects Makeup, Carl Fullerton, Rick Baker, Steve Johnson] Hair Stylists, Phil Leto, Lee Trent. Costume Supervisors, Tony Faso, Bob Ellsworth, Dolores Zuniga, Eric Sandberg, Dallas Dornan. Production Secretary, Amy McElhenney. Production Assistant, Location Coordinator, Mike Henry. Production Assistant, Suzanne E. Petersen. Assistant to Burt Weissbourd, Stephanie Katz. Assistant to John Irvin, Helen Pollak. Orchestrators, Harry Betts, Peter Myers. Dialogue Replacement Editor, Larry Singer. DGA Trainee, Richard Abramitis. Location Auditor, Graham Henderson. Assistant Location Auditor, Martin Pessin. Extra Casting, Sandra Dawes. Stunt Coordinator, Glenn Randall, Jr. Script Supervisor, Sonny Filippini. Property Master, John Zemansky. Transportation Captains, Bob R. Cornell, Don Owens. Key Grip, Billy Simpson. Gaffer, Bill Tandrow. Lighting Consultant, Frank Heeney. Special Effects, Henry Millar, Jr. Title Design, Phill Norman. Title Opticals, Westheimer Co. Added Optical Effects, Peter Kuran. Optical Effects, Universal Title.

Ricky Hawthorne Fred Astaire
John Jaffrey Melvyn Douglas
Edward Wanderley Douglas Fairbanks, Jr.
Sears James John Houseman
Don David Wanderley Craig Wasson
Stella Patricia Neal
Alma Mobley/Eva Galli Alice Krige
Milly Jacqueline Brookes
Gregory Bate Miguel Fernandes
Fenny Bate Lance Holcomb
Young John Jaffrey Mark Chamberlin
Young Ricky Hawthorne Tim Choate
Young Edward Wanderley Kurt Johnson
Young Sears James Ken Olin
Sheriff Hardesty Brad Sullivan
Churchill Michael O'Neil
Omar Norris Guy Boyd
Principal Robert Burr
Mrs. Meredith Helena Carroll
Rea Dedham Robin Curtis
Nettie Dedham Breon Gorman
Mailman James Greene
Eva's Apparitions Cagle D. Green
Pamela Zinszer
Florence Ruth Hunt
Irmengard Betty Low
Helen Deborah Offner
Sears' Mother Virginia P. Bingham
Sears' Father William Conway
Reverend Wilkinson Russell R. Bletzer
Waiter Terrance Mario Carnes
Bus Passengers Randall Crawford
Stephen Goodwins, Mary Jane Mangler
Man in Coffin Alfred Curven
Judge Edward F. Dillon
Coroner Alvin W. Fretz
Student Gale Grindle
Student Solt Hugh Hires
Ricky's Father Raymond J. Quinn
Ricky's Mother Barbara von Zastrow
Stunts Erik Cord
Rita Egleston, Hill Farnsworth
Larry Holt, John Meier
Jeff Ramsey, Richard Warlock

ing—directors and writers are frequently incapable of capturing those special qualities that made the book stand out from the crowd in the first place. Just ask Stanley Kubrick.

But the overwhelming success of *Ghost Story* in both hardcover and paperback (more than 2 million copies are now in print) was enough of an incentive for Universal to tackle the book and its problems. Marianne Moloney turned the book over to 34-year-old screenwriter Lawrence D. Cohen, whom she had met while working at a West Coast talent agency. Cohen (not to be confused

reversed, and the picture is bad because of that," said Cohen, who has written for *The Hollywood Reporter* and *Saturday Review*, as well as serving as production executive for ALICE DOESN'T LIVE HERE ANYMORE. "I've also been near projects where it's not been adhered to closely enough. For me it's a process of really trying to figure out what works in a novel so well that it becomes indelible—and then to find the equivalents, the metaphors that will make the same thing work on screen."

Several months after Cohen first saw the *Ghost Story* manuscript,

"We had many endings. The one with the dead brother was one we tried, but it was a bit too complex. I reshot the end scene so Eva appears. To me, it's a more elegant end—and much more satisfying."

—John Irvin



Above: In the version of the film screened for previews, the late David Wanderley descends the stairs of the old Galli house to confront his twin brother Don. Craig Wasson played both roles. After audiences "demanded" a final confrontation between Don and the ghost of Eva Galli, director John Irvin filmed actress Alice Krige dressed as a beautiful bride, lifting her veil and revealing herself to be a corpse (inset). Dick Smith designed and built the puppet head in a matter of hours.

with "Larry Cohen," the director of *IT'S ALIVE!*; or with Lawrence J. Cohen, whose credits include *THE BIG BUS* and *START THE REVOLUTION WITHOUT ME*) had previously been responsible for the adaptation of Stephen King's *Carrie*, which serves as a textbook example of how to remain faithful to the spirit of a novel while satisfying the demands of a commercial two-hour movie.

Few authors have so publicly praised the screen adaptations of their work as King has done with *CARRIE*. But then few subjects have been translated so well from novel to screen. The announcement that Cohen had been signed to write *GHOST STORY*'s screenplay relieved fans of the novel, but as Cohen himself admits, each new screenplay brings with it new problems.

"I've been involved with projects where the book has been too slavishly

Thom Mount offered the project to Burt Weissbourd, a young producer with a background in finance and educational films. One of Weissbourd's first acts was to arrange a meeting with Cohen, at which he gave the go-ahead to begin the *GHOST STORY* screenplay.

Weissbourd next went out to find a director who could handle the complex story. He decided on John Irvin, a 41-year-old British director known primarily for documentaries and BBC dramas, who had only one previous feature credit and no experience working within the genre.

But according to Irvin, he's always had a streak of the fantastic in him. "I was at boarding schools from the age of seven," he recalled. "From that early age, I was always encouraged by other boys to tell ghost stories. I could always attract an audience. Sometimes I read ghost stories out of books,

and sometimes I invented my own. My drawings also tended to be very macabre and expressionistic. I'm fascinated by gargoyles and cathedrals. With *GHOST STORY*, I've had the chance to release this part of my vision after spending so many years observing reality as a documentary director."

Irvin's experience with documentaries—covering the world's real-life horrors—may have helped him prepare for the make-believe horrors of *GHOST STORY*. "There was a period in my life when I was making documentaries where I went out of my way to get scared," he said. "There's undoubtedly a sense of being very much alive—and lucky to be alive—after you've been scared."

"But I ran from working in documentaries," Irvin added, "because I could not stand the suffering I had to witness, report and film. I am much happier trying to frighten people in a fictional sense than in bringing back footage from Vietnam."

Irvin had originally planned a career in architecture, but switched to film school early on. He never graduated, but that did not slow his career any. While working in the cutting room of the Rank Organization, he was given a grant by the British Film Institute to make a documentary about the town where he attended school. He was 21. "It was shown all over the world and was bought by the BBC," Irvin recalled. "While I was editing that, I made *INHERITANCE* about the consequences, results and anguish of the Algerian War. It won a British Film Academy award. By the age of 22, I was considered pretty hot stuff as a documentary director!"

Irvin continued to make documentaries for the BBC throughout the '60s, eventually working his way into televised dramas. Until recently, Irvin was probably best known for the BBC adaptations of Charles Dickens' *HARD TIMES* and John Le Carré's intricate spy thriller *TINKER, TAILOR, SOLDIER, SPY*—projects which led to his signing by United Artists to helm the adaptation of Frederick Forsythe's *THE DOGS OF WAR*, starring Chris Walken. His work for the BBC also attracted the attention of Universal Studios, and Irvin was approached by Burt Weissbourd about another film project under discussion, a Western.

For *GHOST STORY*, Weissbourd knew he needed a director who could work well with actors and handle a complex script. After screening *TINKER, TAILOR, SOLDIER, SPY*, an intricately-plotted six-part mini-series starring Sir Alec Guinness, Weissbourd was convinced. In May, 1980, Irvin was in the Caribbean finishing *THE DOGS OF WAR* when he was summoned to New York. "I assumed it was to discuss this other project we were developing—the Western," Irvin said. "However, I could tell that they had something else they wanted to talk to me about."

The "something else" they wanted to talk to him about was, of course, *GHOST STORY*. Less than 12 hours after *THE DOGS OF WAR* wrapped principal photography, Irvin was signed for the film.

Although Lawrence D. Cohen had already completed a draft of the screenplay by the time John Irvin was hired as director, the script did not come into fine focus until Irvin's arrival. Ironically, Irvin had never read the best-selling novel, and put off doing so until he and Cohen had knocked out a workable draft of the screenplay.

"I felt that my ignorance would be beneficial, because the book is so complex," Irvin said. "By my openness, my directness and my ignorance, I was perhaps able to see the forest."

The most important decision Cohen and Irvin reached was to change the very nature of the evil itself. "We're telling a slightly different story than Peter Straub was," Cohen said. "It's not human good pitted against a supernatural evil, but a psychological story of four men and what they did to themselves. In the novel, the woman known as Eva Galli [and subsequently as Alma Mobley, Ann-Veronica Moore, Anna Mostyn, Angie Maule, Alice Montgomery and Amy Mockington] is an embodiment of supernatural evil that goes back to the pioneers, the forest and the American Indian. We decided that Eva Galli was a real woman. What happened in 1929 really happened."

In the novel, Straub focuses on a "shapeshifter"—an evil entity capable of changing shape and transforming from human to animal form—who returns to the fictional town of Milburn, New York some 50 years after her accidental murder by a small group of young men. She first arrives in Milburn in 1929 as Eva Galli, a beautiful, mysterious young woman. She is all but worshipped by Ricky Hawthorne, Sears James, Edward Wanderley, John Jaffrey and Lewis Benedikt, until they discover that their idyllic dream goddess has a streak of utter decadence. Shocked by her perversity, Benedikt kills her, and the friends conspire to sink the body in a local pond.

The men have been haunted by their deeds, psychologically and otherwise. Sears James witnessed an apparent "haunting" of two young children by their deceased older brother while teaching in a backwoods town. Lewis Benedikt's wife was tragically and mysteriously killed. Even Edward Wanderley's nephews are caught in the vortex of horror—Don Wanderley becomes involved with the beautifully erotic Alma Mobley, until he senses something repulsive about her; his brother David then meets and falls in love with her, and soon plunges out the window of a high-rise hotel.

Edward himself dies suddenly during a party given in honor of Ann-Veronica Moore, a mysterious actress visiting Milburn. After his death, the remaining members of the so-called "Chowder Society" continue to meet, telling each other ghost stories to try to repress the truth of what has happened—and the fear of what lies in store for them. The four men summon Don Wanderley, a horror novelist himself, to try and understand what is happening to them and their town. Exactly one year after Edward

Wanderley's death, beautiful Anna Mostyn arrives in Milburn and the psychological horror intensifies.

"The changes that we made were necessary to refine a very large and complex book into 100 minutes of drama," Irvin explained. "Once you start refining and looking for the essence of the book, obviously things are going to be lost, good things are going to be sacrificed. It would be impossible—unless you were prepared to film a mini-series—to include every aspect of the book." Determining what action to leave in—and which to discard—forced

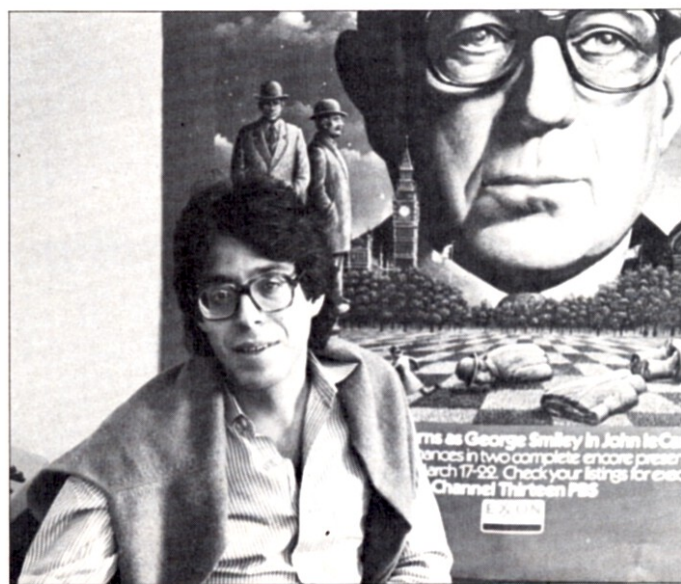
"ghost," nor from the crime itself. Rather, through some Freudian mechanisms, the repressed guilt of the Chowder Society members, coupled with the looming death of Dr. John Jaffrey (Melvyn Douglas), somehow brings on the horrors.

"I'm not a great believer in cosmic evil," Irvin said. "I think it's too easy to say there's an evil force in the universe. I think that the things people do to each other, and are capable of doing to each other, are much more frightening than just a black shadow in the night."

"To me, the most horrific image in

"John Irvin seized upon the elements of guilt and repression. His instinct was to rid the material of everything that he felt to be unnecessarily supernatural. I think it's become a mystery more than a horror film."

—Lawrence D. Cohen



Screenwriter Lawrence D. Cohen, seated in his New York office. The poster advertises John Le Carré's *TINKER, TAILOR, SOLDIER, SPY*, a six-part BBC mini-series that led to director John Irvin's first feature, *THE DOGS OF WAR*.

Irvin and Cohen to carefully consider even the most basic aspects of the novel.

"The book was an embarrassment of riches," Cohen explained. "I think what I accomplished with Burt Weissbourd in the first draft was to find a way to yank this oversized, sprawling book into a movie. We condensed it into a tale which made sense from beginning to end. John did almost the same thing to the script that we had done to the book—take a giant chomp out of it, emphasizing the psychological over the visceral."

"Irvin seized upon the elements of guilt and repression," Cohen continued. "His instinct was to rid the material of everything that he felt to be unnecessarily supernatural. I think it's become a mystery more than a horror film." The evil, according to Cohen, now stems not from the

film is Eva Galli appearing in the back of the car," Irvin continued. "That is, on one level, the climax of the film."

In the book, as in the film, Eva Galli is accidentally knocked unconscious and presumed dead, and the Chowder Society tries to hide her body by placing it in the back of a car and driving the car into a pond. But in the novel, Eva Galli was never a flesh and blood woman, and merely feigned death to better startle the Chowder Society; when she appears in the back window of the car, she smiles at them. In the film, she screams in terror, perhaps the most important single change from the concept of the novel.

"That's her in the car—that's flesh and blood," Irvin said. "The point is they panicked. They incorrectly diagnosed her as dead. And it was this mistake, their rush to hide the body,

that was so awful, so horrific. When she appears in the window, that is the event they will not believe and they will not discuss. That is the fact they conceal for all those years—that she was alive when she went into the pond."

Irvin and Cohen spent several weeks together in London, while Irvin was working on the postproduction of *THE DOGS OF WAR*. Together they broke down scenes, and then Cohen would go off and write the dialogue. Irvin would review the script, writing notes to Cohen about matters that needed more work, deriving inspiration from—among other things—the paintings of Andrew Wyeth and Francis Bacon hanging in the Royal Academy. There were frequent changes to the script, a constant process that continued through rehearsal, principal photography and even into the latter stages of postproduction.

Obviously the scope of Straub's 483-page novel had to be condensed, but Irvin, Cohen and Weissbourd found several elements at the core they felt were non-negotiable. "The brilliant idea of Straub's was having all these old men telling each other ghost stories which have a very real, very significant meaning in their lives," Irvin said. "I think it's a stunning idea."

"The second indispensable idea," continued Cohen, "was what united them—that they did as young men 50 years ago. The third element of appeal was the Don Wanderley tale [Alma Mobley seducing both he and his brother, leading to his brother's death]. There's a moment in that story that sent shivers up our backs. These elements have remained, though they've gone through endless changes and refinements. As for all the stories and characters, there were simply too many."

Unlike the novel, in which the ghost takes on several different forms, Eva Galli returns only as Alma Mobley. "The book had the very attractive—and rather funny—idea that you never know when it's her, because she changes the way she looks," Cohen said. "Don Wanderley came to believe that he could always spot her because in her presence his blood went cold. Well, that's a difficult thing to put on screen."

Cohen sifted through the complex events and numerous characters, combining some and eliminating others entirely. Lewis Benedikt was dropped from the Chowder Society, and Edward Wanderley became the father, rather than the uncle, of Don and David Wanderley. In the novel, Edward has been dead for a year when the story begins. In the film, he survives until Don can return home to bury his brother David and solve the mystery of his death.

Also eliminated were the mutilated animals, and the green phosphorescent light that indicates the shapeshifter's presence at key points. And much of the novel's graphic violence has also been pared.

"One of the early decisions was that there wouldn't be rolling heads and blood spurting in all directions," Irvin explained. "I think there is a big difference between a ghost story and a

horror film—between scaring people and brutalizing them with disgusting special effects.”

In addition, the supernatural qualities of Gregory and Fenny Bates have been eliminated. In the novel, Fenny is corrupted and possessed by his dead brother Gregory in Sears James' story of what happened to him as a teacher [a retelling of Henry James' *The Turn of the Screw*]. Fenny and Greg then turn up in Milburn (and elsewhere) as ghouls in liaison with the shapeshifter's spirit. Although the telling of the story was cut from the film, Fenny and Gregory were kept around as real flesh-and-blood crazies squatting in the old Eva Galli house.

The manner in which the ghost is finally exorcised is also a case where a substantial change from the novel still retains the basic imagery and feeling. In the novel, the protagonists have always wondered what would have happened if they had shot the lynx that Eva Galli turned into on that fateful day in 1929 when they

dumped her body in a pond. Don Wanderley finally discovers the elusive shapeshifter in the form of a little girl, kidnaps her, and eventually kills her. Her spirit tries to escape in the form of a wasp, which he slices apart in his hand, destroying her forever. In doing so, he drives straight into the ocean, and it is this essential imagery of a car in the water that is retained in the film.

In Cohen's screenplay, Ricky Hawthorne realizes that Eva Galli's spirit can only be put to rest by acknowledging the crime and raising the car she was drowned in from the bottom of Dedham's pond. "You end up borrowing bits and pieces all over the place, and it just gets re-channeled and comes out as a new thing," said Cohen. "But the imagery of the book was terribly valuable. Water has emerged as the recurrent image throughout the movie."

In the script, water appears as a constant echo of Eva Galli's drowning: it flows over basins, cascades out of fountains, and, of course, it

blankets Milburn in snow. "It's always there as a trigger, really, for violence or erotic events," Irvin explained.

Part of the inspiration for the "water motif" came from Andrew Wyeth's "Spring Fed," a peaceful-looking painting on exhibit at the Royal Academy. But Wyeth was just one of many sources that Irvin and Cohen drew from while writing the screenplay. Like Straub, they also turned to the roots of horror, incorporating snatches of Poe, Hawthorne and James into the script.

Like most films, the script went through constant change, with revisions coming daily during principal photography. Changes continued through the editing stage to the first round of sneak previews in October, when Irvin watched and listened to an audience react to the film. "If a film catches in an audience, you know it. I listen to people shuffling and coughing—and the silences," he said. "After a preview I go straight to the men's room and loiter. People

tend to be very outspoken in men's rooms. That was more useful to me than all the paraphernalia of audience research. I rely on my own gut."

Several major revisions were undertaken as a direct result of the previews, including the rare instance of shooting new makeup effects. In addition, the original ending was scrapped. Originally, the film featured a confrontation between Don Wanderley and his dead twin brother, one of the only "waking dreams" to make the transition from novel to screen. "We had many endings," Irvin said. "The one with the brother was just one we tried. However, it was a bit too complex. Instead, I reshoot the end scene so Eva appears. To me, it's a more elegant, and more irrevocable end—and to me, much more satisfying."

Occasionally, the reworking of Straub's material caused problems in continuity, as characters weren't given enough screen time to fully explain who they were or what finally became of them. A perfect example is Fenny Bate: in the book, Fenny is killed by Peter Barnes (a character dropped entirely from the film), but not in the movie. "He survives," Irvin laughed. "But as to where he is today, I wouldn't know."

"In adapting a book you break it down structurally, and you end up going through the same routes and problems that the novelist went through," Cohen explained. "Although a change is made from the material, an integrity of style and intent is maintained. I'm hopeful that a film will work on its own terms just as well as the book did on its own terms, but they're not necessarily the same terms."

"If John [Irvin] took away elements and scenes," Cohen added, "he brought to the piece as a whole a different and overriding logic. He also added his own esthetic sensibility."

When it doesn't snow, you just have to improvise

Among the more esoteric problems encountered with bringing *GHOST STORY* alive were some rather prosaic ones: there was almost no snow in Saratoga Springs, New York and neighboring areas where the film was shot. To compensate, the producers devised several solutions, including hiring snow-making machines from a local ski resort (below), which were also used for the Winter Olympics in nearby Lake Placid. The machines work by spraying tiny droplets of water into the air; if the temperature is below 28° F, it descends as snow. For scenes where blowing snow was required—including shots of Douglas Fairbanks, Jr. wandering through Milburn in what appears to be a blizzard (inset)—an old Hollywood standby was used: blowing white plastic chips into the air with huge fans. Other solutions including trucking in snow from remote areas, restaging certain scenes indoors, and having visual effects supervisor Albert Whitlock create the snow with his remarkable matte paintings (see photos page 28).



By August, 1980, an acceptable script had been hashed out, although several revisions, rewrites and reshoots were still to come. During the fall, Cohen, Irvin, producer Burt Weissbourd, Universal executive Marianne Moloney and casting director Mike Fenton worked to assemble a cast.

From the earliest conception of the

film, it was assumed that a quartet of Hollywood's most accomplished actors would portray the "Chowder Society," the four old friends who dress in evening clothes, drink cognac and share the most terrifying of ghost stories with each other.

"The balance, I thought, was terribly important," explained director John Irvin. "I saw it in terms of a string quartet."

Fred Astaire was the first to be signed, portraying Ricky Hawthorne, the only Chowder Society member to survive in both the book and the film. John Houseman (as the overbearing Sears James) and Douglas Fair-

banks, Jr. (as Edward Wanderley) "quickly fell into place," according to Weissbourd.

The late Melvyn Douglas, worried about his ailing health, had strong doubts about accepting the role of Dr. John Jaffrey, particularly as the script called for several scenes to be set outdoors. The script was restructured so that Douglas would not have to play exterior scenes, making his real-life frailty an integral part of the character and the story. In the final script, Jaffrey's impending death becomes a key factor in the ghost's appearance in Milburn after 50 years.

Sadly, the 80-year-old actor died of pneumonia and heart problems on August 4, 1981, several months after the completion of GHOST STORY's principal photography. Douglas' illustrious career included a Tony Award (for his role in THE BEST MAN) and two Oscars (HUD, 1963; BEING THERE, 1980). The cast and crew of GHOST STORY were uniform in their deep praise and affection for him, and spoke of his courage during the filming.

"He was desperately ill, and everybody knew it," said John Houseman. "But strangely enough, any time there was a party, he was the last to leave. And although his contract said he shouldn't do certain things, he wandered out into the snow and performed and suffered with the rest of us in that arduous climate."

Douglas' poor health did not diminish his sense of humor. "One time while on the set with

the Chowder Society," Irvin recalled, "he said jokingly, 'Come on, we'd better be good in this—this could be our last film!'"

Ironically, the last scene Douglas filmed was John Jaffrey's wake, for which he rested peacefully in an open coffin. The scene has since been removed from the film, partly to shorten the film's running time, and, one assumes, as a display of good taste on the part of the filmmakers.

"He got up out of the coffin," Irvin said. "We announced it was his wrap shot, and the entire crew came on the set and applauded as he walked into the darkness. He's outstanding in the film, and I'd like to think it was an elegant swan song."

The gathering of the famous quartet had a humbling effect on the cast and crew, but for director John Irvin, it was strictly business as usual. "I worked with them only as actors," he said. "It's only afterwards that I'm aware, perhaps, of the scale, the size of their celebrity and their historical importance in terms of the film industry. The day to day problems of filmmaking are quite enough to stop one from ever thinking about them in any other terms than as actors first."

"What I found interesting," he added, "was that they all come from different branches of the entertainment business. They had never really connected with each other before, except socially."

The real problem in assembling GHOST STORY's cast was finding an actress to play the beautiful, erotic and mysterious Eva Galli Alma Mobley. "I tried to cast an American actress," Irvin said. "I met with a lot of people in New York and Los Angeles and just couldn't find one. A lot of the people I wanted to see and meet with—who might have been good for the part—didn't want to meet because having read the script, they were put off, overwhelmed by the sexuality."

When Irvin was unable to cast the title role, he returned to London to finish postproduction on THE DOGS OF WAR. Susan Figgis, Irvin's casting director on that film, knew of Alice Krige (pronounced kree-ga)—a lovely, red-haired native

Falling for Alma Mobley, Part II

Above: a dummy of Douglas Fairbanks, Jr. built by Dick Smith for Edward Wanderley's fall from a Milburn bridge. Due to production delays, almost no footage of the dummy was shot, and none of it appears in the final film. Below Left: Smith (right) shows Fairbanks' false head to director John Irvin (left) and

cinematographer Jack Cardiff. "It looked very interesting," Smith said of the dummy head, which was based on a life cast of Fairbanks. "Very realistically alive and dead at the same time." Below Right: Douglas Fairbanks (right) and a stunt man wearing a white wig, eyeglass frames and

a "quick and crude" mask based on the dummy head. The stunt man was needed for a shot of Wanderley actually falling off the bridge—one of the

few shots from the sequence that remains in the film.



of South Africa—and thought Irvin and the young actress should get together. After a brief meeting in which he was impressed as much by her intensity as by her credits (including a featured role in *CHARIOTS OF FIRE*), Irvin told the young actress to look over the screenplay and return for another interview.

"*GHOST STORY* was one of those extraordinary chances," said Krige, a graduate of London's Central School of Speech and Drama, and a veteran of several BBC dramatic productions. "I read the script and I thought it was fascinating. I thought the series of images through it were marvelous; the way the town goes deeper and deeper into the heart of winter as the nightmares become more penetrating and horrifying; the apparition of wet hair; and water, always water. There were so many facts, so many layers of myth from the sins of the fathers. I thought the whole thing was very, very dense."

Irvin was impressed with Krige. "It was obvious she had a very good insight on the character," he said. Unlike other actresses who were dismayed with the film's raw elements, Irvin discovered that Krige was fascinated with the acting problems created by the role.

"One of the advantages of casting Alice is that she's very unfamiliar," Irvin explained. "If Meryl Streep was in the part, the audience would think, 'That's not a ghost; that's Meryl Streep.' The fact that Alice Krige is unfamiliar makes her more mysterious and more elusive. She's also a startlingly good actress."

Irvin picked another relative unknown, Craig Wasson, to play the dual role of David and Don Wanderley, the twin sons of the character played by Fairbanks. "I wanted an actor who could convey to me both weakness and strength," explained Irvin. "I didn't want somebody who was an obvious winner right from the beginning of the film—somebody who looked as though he was going to survive the trials we were going to put him through. I wanted somebody who looked vulnerable, but, when tested, could come up with the necessary strength of character."

To play the four members of the Chowder Society for the scenes set in 1929, Irvin picked young stage actors with little or no screen experience. The four are: Ken Olim as Sears James (John Houseman's role), Tim Choate as Ricky Hawthorne (Astaire's role), Mark Chamberlin as John Jaffrey (Douglas's role), and Kurt Johnson as Edward Wanderley (Fairbanks' role). Although some consideration was given to how the young actors resembled their elder counterparts, it was not deemed crucial to the film because it was felt that during 50 years the characters' appearances would have changed anyway.

That led to some amusement when Houseman, Astaire, Douglas and Fairbanks were introduced to Olim, Choate, Chamberlin and Johnson. "It was a very interesting scene when we were all invited to meet 'ourselves,'" Houseman said. "We had to pick out who we *thought* had been chosen to represent us. It wasn't easy to decide."

GHOST STORY's cast and crew assembled in Saratoga Springs—located in upstate New York—in January 1981. Irvin had made an extensive location search of the area before finding what he wanted. He needed an area that would have sufficient snow during the winter to preserve the mood of the novel and screenplay. Unfortunately for the *GHOST STORY* company, it hardly snowed at all during that winter, causing several expensive production headaches. But on another account, Saratoga Springs proved perfect: it served

"One of the interesting things that emerged out of rehearsal," Irvin said, "was the imperative to visualize their nightmares—their individual horror. It adds a level to the film that wouldn't have been there if we hadn't rehearsed."

In particular, neither Edward Wanderley's "wedding" nightmare—in which his son Don is married to an angelic Alma Mobley—nor John Jaffrey's nightmare—in which a woman's body he has pronounced dead rises from an examining table to strangle him—had been conceptualized until Irvin and the cast began

"I ran from making documentaries because I couldn't stand the suffering I had to witness, report and film. I am much happier trying to frighten people in a fictional sense than in bringing back footage from Vietnam."

—John Irvin



John Irvin poses on the graveyard set used briefly in conjunction with an Edgar Allan Poe story told by John Houseman. An Albert Whitlock matte painting designed to enhance the location (but never used) is shown on the following pages.

as the site of both the exteriors and interiors of the homes of the four Chowder Society members.

"There were all those old houses that had the kind of richness in texture that we were looking for," explained Burt Weissbourd, who noted that the Victorian-style homes were roomy enough to allow the comfortable operation of a film crew. "It was then a question of searching within a reasonable travel time of Saratoga Springs to find a town where we could shoot our exteriors." Two small towns in Vermont—Woodstock and Sharon—were eventually used for exterior views of Milburn, though Albert Whitlock's matte paintings were used for distant views of the town [see page 29].

Before any of the filming actually began, Irvin conducted a two-week rehearsal period at Saratoga Springs, where the script continued to evolve,

hashing out the script together.

"A director," Irvin explained, "is obligated to say something when an actor asks, 'I'm lying in bed; I'm dreaming. What is my nightmare?' You can't fudge it in rehearsal. You have to provide a specific which he can recognize and incorporate into the performance. If you just have him sort of yelling in his sleep, it's going to be very cliché-ridden. So one has to find a specific. Once you start doing that, you start to say, 'Gosh, I rather like that! Why don't we film it? Let's get the audience in on this!'"

A scene involving Don Wanderley and Alma Mobley is indicative of the kind of nuances in *GHOST STORY* that arose during rehearsal. In discussing the sexuality between Don and Alma, the water motif was again brought in by deciding to put them in a bathtub together. "Suppose that when they're playing in the tub, he

pulls her under and then she comes flying up, screaming?" Irvin said. "It's one of the most frightening images in the film. In the scene that follows that, she's sitting up in the middle of the night and he asks, 'What's the matter?' She quietly says, 'Water... That is a chilling moment.'"

Irvin also used the rehearsal period to work out the intense lovemaking scenes between Alma and Don. "I'll never forget the day we did this astonishing scene in Alma's apartment, where she has brought Don home for the first time," Alice Krige recalled. "It's the scene where they first make love, and it's more like a wrestling match, I think; than anything one might describe as lovemaking. From the way it was described in the script, it seemed quite devastating. I thought it would take us *days* to film, but, in fact, it took us a couple of hours."

"We had four days of rehearsal before we started," Krige continued, "and we choreographed the entire sequence from beginning to end. Fully dressed. We just did it and worked out the various shapes. John asked [production illustrator] Joe Hurley to be present, and he storyboarded everything. He put it up in the art department, and it was there for everyone to see, which de-mystified everything." The storyboards provided a basis for a solid, shot-by-shot plan for the scene, greatly easing the actual filming.

"I think that when you're directing the act of sex," Irvin said, "it's not enough to say, 'Look, boys and girls, let's get it together and do whatever takes your fancy, and I'll shoot it.' That, to me, is a dereliction of your duty as a director. You've abandoned your command. With this scene, I wanted something that was very abandoned and physical, and the only way I could see of getting it to work was that the actor and actress had to be totally unemotionally involved. It had to be seen as an exercise—not as an event."

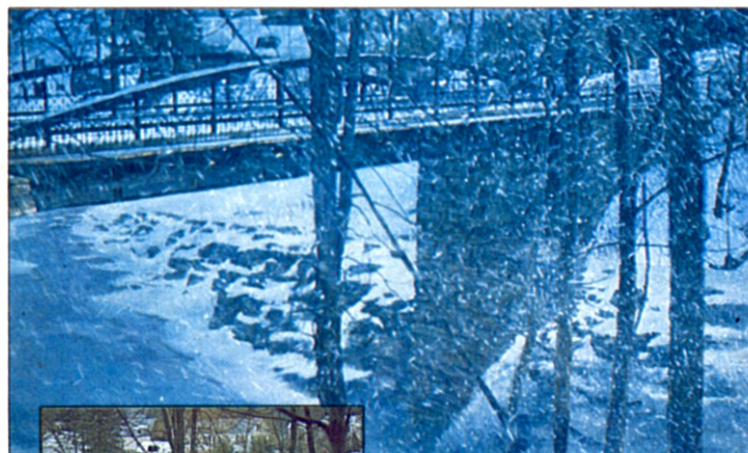
"We did each move in a series of numbers, so they weren't thinking about sex at all; they were thinking about numbers!" Irvin added. "I don't enjoy shooting sexuality, partly because it creates a false tension on the set. That's the reason I tend to make it swift and vivid. It's always a bit awkward, and I'm always so relieved when it's done."

Besides having the obvious value in terms of script and scene development, Irvin's rehearsal period provided one of the highlights of the production: weeks before the young Chowders had actually been cast (their scenes—set in the summer—weren't filmed until May), John Irvin had his four elderly actors read through that portion of the script set in 1929. "I wish it had been done on tape," screenwriter Lawrence Cohen exclaimed. "It was one of the great experiences of all time, seeing each of them at their age today playing 20-year-olds, falling in love with the woman that Alice Krige portrays. It was very charming, funny, and finally—when they realized what they'd done—utterly moving. Seeing their faces today acting those young parts was, to my mind, an incredible privilege. It's something I treasure."



The Mattes of Al Whitlock

Creating the film's atmosphere and mood, and providing snow when nature hadn't.



Albert Whitlock, matte artist *extraordinaire*, was originally involved with *GHOST STORY* in a marginal capacity. But as it turned out, Whitlock and assistant Syd Dutton completed perhaps as many as two dozen matte paintings for the film, many of which were subsequently eliminated during editing as director John Irvin strove to keep the film's running time to less than two hours.

Whitlock was primarily charged with providing the production company what Mother Nature hadn't: mountains of snow. Though the winter of 1981 was painfully cold in the Northeast, the anticipated heavy snowfalls never materialized. In a bind, the filmmakers resorted to the type of snow-making machines commonly used at ski resorts, and Whitlock was called in on many scenes—where his services had not been anticipated—to add snow for the backgrounds, including the paintings shown at left and right.

But Whitlock was also given the assignment to paint what was then the film's opening shot: a 12-foot-long painting of a graveyard (*above*) to be used as "an eerie background" to a ghost story told by John Houseman. The script called for an empty graveyard at sundown, an strange and beautiful landscape covered with mist, littered with moss, dotted with weeds and sprinkled with tilted gravestones with pitted markings. The painting was designed to blend with a live-action Florida

graveyard.

After the painting was completed, Irvin changed his idea for the opening of the film, moving the story (a retelling of Poe's *The Premature Burial*) back into the body of the film, and retaining only a brief cut of the camera moving towards the fresh grave filmed on the graveyard set. The matte painting was briefly considered as a background for the film's titles, but that idea, too, was abandoned.

Although the graveyard might have served as a set-piece all its own, the majority of Whitlock's work consisted mainly of touch-ups—the sort of matte paintings you never think about, or hardly even notice.

For example, for a sequence involving Edward Wanderley's (Douglas Fairbanks, Jr.) suicidal leap off a bridge onto the frozen river beneath, Whitlock created a series of paintings (*left*) that heightened the suspense, but drew no attention to themselves.

"There was an actual river, but it wasn't particularly deep or wide," Whitlock said of the Vermont location. "The river was frozen, but because it was covered by snow, it had no depth; it just looked like a white sheet on the ground. So I put in the ice—giving it a blue color to set it apart from the snow—added rocks and deepened the ravine."

Several different angles were filmed, including a low angle of the bridge and the river (*top*), another shot showing Fairbanks' point of view as he approaches the edge of



the bridge (not shown), and a long shot depicting the view of Omar, the drunken snowplow operator who witnesses the suicide (bottom). Each shot required deepening the ravine and taking out the flat, white color of the snow and adding the ice. In addition, Whitlock had to remove a large, yellow air cushion stationed below the bridge (note insets of actual live-action photography) used by the stunt man. Each of the mattes underwent color desaturation at the lab to better blend in with the live-action elements.

Whitlock was also responsible for establishing shots of Milburn (top right), the fictional New York town where the story is set. Whitlock photographed a high angle of Sharon, Vermont (inset), but left in only a few of the buildings—including the town's church—creating most of the vista from scratch.

"I encouraged them to stay with one angle of the town for all the mood shots, which they decided to go with, although at first they

Albert Whitlock



wanted different angles, so we did others as well," Whitlock explained. "We went to a great deal of trouble and did a lot of painting, and then they decided to go back to my original idea. Of course it should be the same angle! The audience would wonder if it was even the same town if the angles were moved about!"

Several views of the town were painted to create appropriate moods—calm, snowing and sunny. Different lighting effects were created by using overlays, or more frequently, actually painting them in. For the film's opening shot, Whitlock had the moon pass behind billowing clouds, an effect achieved by shooting the sky in a separate pass and panning over the painted clouds. Falling snow was added optically. The view shown here—with the darkened clouds and accumulated snow drifts—was not used.

Establishing shots of the homes of the Chowder Society members were also created, but fell victim to the editor's sharp knife. For the home of Dr. John Jaffrey (Melvyn Douglas), Whitlock created at least two different views of the house at night (bottom right), adding snow, lighting effects and painting out the neighboring houses (note inset).

"We found houses in Saratoga," Whitlock explained, "but they were very close together, and they felt it took away from the story to have the audience think that these men have neighbors only a few feet away. So I put some 'air' around the houses to make them stand alone. I took photographs of the actual houses and used them for mattes, aging them a bit or adding a little more gingerbread around them or whatever else was called for."





Oh, the painful indignity of being a ghost

Being run down was child's play, but the bitter cold nearly got Alice Krige.

As Sears James (John Houseman) drives his Rolls Royce over snow-covered roads to find help for the stricken Don Wanderley, a small figure steps out towards the center of the road. Drawing closer, James recognizes the apparition as Eva Galli (**above**), and floors his accelerator in an effort to kill her once again. But his car seems to pass directly through her, a bit of screen magic performed by a Universal crew headed by Al Whitlock.

While actress Alice Krige did, in fact, stand in the middle of a snow-covered road, there was no car bearing down on her. Instead, a specially-modified camera car sped away from her. When the footage was printed in reverse, the camera appears to head toward Krige.

To enhance the illusion that the audience is actually seeing Houseman's point of view, a windshield, dashboard, and steering wheel were shot against a blue screen and superimposed over the image of Krige standing in the road. The shot even includes mist and snowflakes falling on the windshield.

Although Whitlock's optical tricks maintained a level of safety for Krige, it did nothing to protect the actress from the elements. As usual, the weather wasn't cooperative. The scene was filmed shortly after dawn in the bitter cold, with temperatures well below zero. While Krige stayed warm in a full-length down jacket between takes (**below right**, with director John Irvin), she had to endure the freezing temperatures for long periods as the camera truck made its way down the road.

Although the day was cold, it was bright and sunny—too bright, as the script called for an overcast, dusk-

like scene. The crew was assembled for a second bitter-cold morning, but with the same results: the sky stayed bright blue, and filters were needed to make it seem gloomier.

Because the sequence was filmed live, and not against a blue screen, Irvin and cinematographer Jack Cardiff were able to use lighting effects to best advantage. Two spotlights were mounted on the camera truck at the same height and distance apart as car headlights would be (note photo, bottom right). As the "car" closes in on Krige, she is illuminated by the twin beams. But as she approaches the front of the car, her image becomes dark as she falls into the shadow between the "headlights."

To help create the impression that Krige is actually coming *through* the windshield, Whitlock faded out the

image of the dashboard at what would have been the point of impact, and zoomed in on Krige on the optical printer. At the same time, he introduced the image of a skull on top of Krige's face (**sequence, left**).

"We'll come up to her and at a certain point, we'll fade out her face," said Whitlock, who used a plastic skull lifted from the set of Universal's CAT PEOPLE. "I positioned the skull on some black velvet and lined it up through the camera to her face exactly. The camera moved in so that her face goes out of focus and the skull comes right into the lens. It looks like the head comes right through the windshield into the car."

Although the effect lasts only for a few frames, it manages to leave a subliminal impression that *something* terribly odd is happening to Alice Krige—and to John Houseman.



There were many who said that Peter Straub's book was unfilmable, that it was too long, too complex, too stylized. But even with a completed script, there were many questions still to be answered. For instance, what do you show when the script calls for a horrible apparition scary enough to literally frighten people to death? Even the original novel was no help, as it skillfully skirted the issue of exactly what Alma Mobley really looked like.

To help define the look of the film, John Irvin turned to Michael Seymour, the acclaimed British production designer of ALIEN. "We had lengthy production meetings about every aspect of design," Irvin said. "His contribution not only included the houses and interiors, but the makeup, costumes, and overall effect of the film, which is very calculated."

Most of the film was shot on a variety of New York and Florida locations, picked to create the proper ambiance with a minimum of redressing. One notable exception was the exterior of Eva Galli's house. A real house was used for scenes set in 1929, but a facade had to be built for scenes set in the present, showing the house as a wreck. Interiors of the Galli house were shot in an abandoned train station in nearby Albany, New York, which was converted into a workable sound stage. Additional interiors were filmed there when needed, including a poltergeist attack against a farm house that was edited out of the film.

To help present the complex story, the three primary portions of the film—the current story, set in Milburn; a flashback to Don and Alma, set at a Florida university some years before; and the death of Eva Galli, set in Milburn in 1929—were kept stylistically different. Drawing inspiration from styles of painting—Expressionism, Impressionism and Surrealism, among others—Irvin, Seymour and veteran cinematographer Jack Cardiff (THE DOGS OF WAR, THE RED SHOES) used a variety of filters, lenses and camera movements to impart separate identities to the three segments.

For example, the Florida sequences were filmed with bright colors and wide angle lenses, setting it apart from the winter scenes, which had a subdued, almost monochromatic tinge that served as a fitting backdrop to the growing nightmare that enveloped the town. For the flashback to the summer of 1929, long lenses and heavy diffusion contributed to the romantic feeling.

Although everyone knew in advance that the production would be a difficult one—spanning several months of shooting with many complex effects—one problem that Irvin, Seymour and Cardiff hadn't anticipated was the weather. It was simply too nice out to make a horror film, with weather better suited for calendars and Christmas cards.

"The weather was contrary, yes," said Irvin, in a typical British understatement. "Although it was extremely cold, there was a tendency for the sun to shine brightly every morning. We did everything in our power to blot out the sun."

Jack Cardiff was forced to use heavy filters to turn the sky from bright blue to dirty grey. But filters could do nothing about the second weather-related problem: there was no snow. The script called for the town of Milburn to be buried in snow, totally inundated and isolated by mountainous drifts. Normally, the northeast is up against some pretty heavy snowfalls, but not the winter of 1981. Although certain scenes could be re-staged and even moved indoors, the crew had to find snow.

"We had to run around a lot," pro-

duced for falling snow required that Irvin turn to an old Hollywood standby: white plastic chips blown into camera range by huge fans.

But a good part of GHOST STORY's winter mood was actually supplied in Southern California, courtesy of Albert Whitlock's paint brush. "My contribution wasn't to have been much on GHOST STORY," said Whitlock, whose original agreement with Weissbourd was on a stand-by basis, doing whatever opticals or touch-up work was required. "Had the production gotten the weather conditions they wanted, my

town, with the moon going behind the clouds; a day shot, with snow beginning to fall; a shot with the storm building to a greater intensity; and finally, for the *dénouement*, a shot of the town in late sunlight, still buried in snow, "all very benign looking," according to Whitlock.

To create the different lighting effects, Whitlock either painted them in directly, or used a series of painted overlays to obtain highlights on buildings and the terrain. While shooting his reference footage, Whitlock and cinematographer Bill Taylor shot footage of a car traveling along a divided highway—which ran along the foreground of the frame—in the event that the director wanted one of the mattes to exhibit movement. But in the end, Irvin opted to keep the town still and desolate. "They wanted the film to show a private world, the way PAPER MOON did," Whitlock said.

In addition to the matte paintings, Whitlock was called upon to engineer several special effects sequences for the film. In one instance, the script called for Sears James (John Houseman) to drive through an apparition of Eva Galli standing in the middle of a snow-covered road dressed only in summer clothes [see page 30]. Houseman floors the accelerator, trying to run her down, but his car passes straight through her and skids out of control. An obvious solution would have been to film Krige in front of a blue screen and optically insert her into the scene. But it was decided that for the utmost realism, the scene should be shot live, on location, as much as possible.

"We couldn't get too close with the car, obviously, without injuring her," explained Whitlock. The shot was therefore started with a camera car—a special car with camera mountings and lighting controls—directly in front of Alice Krige.

"We rigged some lights for headlights," Whitlock said. "She was brilliantly lit. Then we made a flying start and pulled back away from her. The film was printed in reverse to make it look as though the car is going to hit her."

Although Whitlock's optical tricks maintained a level of safety for Krige, it did nothing to protect the actress from the elements: filming the sequence in the frigid snow must have been torturous for her.

David Wanderley's plunge from the 29th floor of his New York apartment building was an even greater effects challenge for Whitlock, who teamed up with Universal effects veteran Mel Arnold on the sequence [see page 22]. In the shot, David Wanderley (Craig Wasson, playing Don Wanderley's twin brother) must appear to fly out his large picture window plunging downward and bursting through the glass roof of a swimming pool. Originally, as one final surprise, the pool was to be drained, but, in order to bring in the ever-present water motif, Irvin had Wanderley miss the pool by inches, hitting the concrete with a splat.

For this sequence, location filming was clearly impossible, and extensive blue-screen and miniature effects had to be relied upon. The se-

"It was an interesting scene when we were invited to meet 'ourselves,' and then we had to pick out who we thought had been chosen to portray us. It was hard to decide."

—John Houseman

The four members of the Chowder Society, as they appear in the film in 1929 and the present. From top (l-r): Sears James (John Houseman, Ken Olin); Ricky Hawthorne (Fred Astaire, Tim Choate); John Jaffrey (Melvyn Douglas, Mark Chamberlin); Edward Wanderley (Douglas Fairbanks, Jr., Kurt Johnson).



ducer Burt Weissbourd said. "We had to buy snow in every form, whether it was a matte painting or bringing in guys to make it. It came out so there was a minimal amount of compromise. It wasn't always ideal, but we somehow managed to come up with the snow."

Occasionally, the company would simply haul away snow from remote areas and spread it around. Other times, artificial snow was made with the type of machines used for ski slopes. "We found the same group of people who made the snow for the 1980 Winter Olympics in Lake Placid," Weissbourd said. "I guess we bought about eight acres of snow from them."

Unfortunately, the artificial snow tended to thaw rather quickly, turning to mush and taking on a dirty grey appearance. And its uses were limited. For instance, scenes that

contribution would have been minimal. As it turned out, I was flying back and forth to the East Coast doing what I call 'darning and mending'—rescuing an otherwise difficult situation by doing various kinds of snow effects with matte paintings."

One of Whitlock's primary responsibilities was blanketing Milburn in snow, accomplished by showing a distant view of the town under a variety of conditions reflecting the changing weather and action. Whitlock himself photographed a high-angle view of Sharon, Vermont, that was to serve as the basis for Milburn. A portion of the actual town was left in ("There was a rather nice arrangement of farm buildings and a church"), but the atmospheric mattes are mostly Whitlock's work, setting the tone for the scenes that follow.

Several shots of the town were created: at night, the first view of the

quence starts with Wasson crashing through the window of the New York apartment set at Universal. The window, with a large New York City backdrop, was broken by throwing a large iron cross through it—the only thing that would even roughly approximate the type of break one might expect from a body hurtling through glass. The background was then replaced by a blue screen and Wasson lunged through the empty window. In the composite of the two pieces of film, Wasson's image blocks out the weight and it appears that he is breaking through the glass.

To shoot his downward plunge, Mel Arnold and a five man crew spent six weeks building an intricate miniature of the two buildings, the skylight, the street and cars below. Craig Wasson was filmed gesturing wildly against a blue screen and composited with views of the miniature. Although the actual New York building was available for filming—and was used as a background plate for several of the blue screen shots—Irvin wanted the camera to fly down the building "chasing" Wanderley, a near-impossible set up on a real building, but a simple matter of tracking along the length of the miniature.

For Wanderley's crash through the skylight, a full scale section of the window and grid was positioned in front of a background photo of the actual New York building. A stunt double crashed through the glass, and Whitlock optically removed his image from the film with a series of rotoscoped mattes, making it appear that the glass was breaking by itself. Wasson's image was then matted into the scene. For the brief take required, the cinematic sleight-of-hand is undetectable.

As filming progressed, Whitlock was often called upon to make up for shortcomings in the various locations used. For example, several matte paintings were required for the death of Edward Wanderley (Douglas Fairbanks, Jr.). In the sequence, Wanderley trudges through a blizzard, trying to follow an apparition of his son, David, who has only recently fallen to his death. At a bridge over a frozen river, Wanderley is startled by the decayed ghost of Alma Mobley and falls over the side.

Several angles of the scene were filmed, and Whitlock painted mattes and optically added snow for each of them—making the location appear more treacherous than it really was. But by the time the film was edited, parts of the sequence had been eliminated, and with it some of Whitlock's work.

The shots of the river weren't the only Whitlock contributions to feel the editor's knife. Though at the time of this writing—seven weeks before the film was to open—a final cut had not been agreed upon, it was clear that only a portion of Whitlock's work would end up on screen. "They've overshot the movie," Whitlock explained, "so in order to tell the story through dialogue scenes, certain things have to go."

Also eliminated during editing was one of Whitlock's most impressive matte, a 12-foot long graveyard

painting, designed to accompany Sears James' ghost story (an *homage* to Poe's "The Premature Burial"), which was originally to have opened the picture. The camera was to pan over the painting, crossing over a large tree in the foreground which served as a joining device to live-action photography of a real Florida graveyard that had been dressed by Michael Seymour with large cut-outs of mausoleums, statues and headstones covered in moss. The camera was to pan over to a recently dug grave, from which a man's muffled voice cried out, "I'm alive! I'm alive!"

woman, and all these things," Irvin explained. "So the moon has taken on a character in our story, really, because of the song."

Whitlock's matte paintings and visual effects for *GHOST STORY* may be among his final achievements, as he has announced he plans to retire in little more than a year. "I'm 66," Whitlock explained. "I lose my patience after a while. Most of the old-timers are gone now, anyway. I'll keep busy, you can count on that. I'll paint, and I've got a couple of cameras. Maybe I'll turn out a bit of film or something."

"To me, the most horrific image in the film is Eva Galli appearing in the back of the car. That's the event the Chowder Society will not believe and not discuss. It is—on one level—the climax of the film."

—John Irvin



Eva Galli (Alice Krige) screams as she awakens in the back seat of a car about to slip beneath the surface of the Dedham pond. Galli is knocked unconscious by Edward Wanderley, then in his 20s, incorrectly pronounced dead by third-year med student John Jaffrey, and drowned by the Chowder Society in an attempt to cover up their crime. The tragic mistake comes back—literally—to haunt them.

But late in production—after Whitlock completed the large painting—Irvin decided to change the opening of the film to a night shot of Milburn—ironically, another of Whitlock's mattes. "The film starts now with a shot of the moon looking down over Milburn," Irvin said. "Then we go to the four gentlemen, disturbed in their sleep. The last one is Douglas Fairbanks. As he chokes and gags, we burst into the main titles [done by Phill Norman, who won an Emmy for his *SHOGUN* titles], which is a series of shots of the moon with water running across it. It's very effective. It's like tearstains."

The new concept grew out of a line in a song, *The Sweetheart of Signa Chi*: "The moonlight beams on a girl of my dreams." The song is sung by the Chowder Society during the flashback set in 1929. "The moonlight is tied with the idea of moon-goddess,

last-minute changes in concept which leave behind months of effort on the cutting room floor are nothing new for Whitlock. Neither is it a new experience for makeup artist Dick Smith, whose most recent major assignment prior to *GHOST STORY* was *ALTERED STATES* [11:1-14], another project where it seemed most of his work was left out of the final print.

Smith was first approached for *GHOST STORY* in the fall of 1980, when production manager Bob Brown described the film's horrific climax: the exhumation of Eva Galli's corpse from its watery grave. In the script, Ricky Hawthorne (Fred Astaire) realizes the only way to exorcise Eva Galli's spirit—and to save Don Wanderley from Alma Mobley's clutches—is to admit to the crime and prompt the sheriff to raise the car that Eva Galli was drowned in

50 years ago. As the car door is opened, the corpse would gush out in a torrent of water and land in the snow, her dead flesh sliding off, leaving her skull symbolically white and gleaming. "That's a tricky number to do!" Smith exclaimed.

Although Smith has recently shied away from extremely violent films, he felt *GHOST STORY* did not qualify as a gore film, despite the shock values, because of the lack of blood and guts. "I'm on the brink here, perhaps, in making these apparitions," Smith admitted. "I realize they're very nasty and they're decayed, but I think that's legitimate. Everyone is frightened by a skull, and yet, there is nothing intrinsically frightening about one. It's a beautiful piece of architecture. A bone isn't frightening—the engineering is marvelous. In fact, some of the forms in bones and skulls have aspects that are subtle and beautiful."

Smith was officially signed to the project in December, 1980, shortly before production was to begin; John Irvin had apparently been pleased with Smith's appliance makeup for Christopher Walken's torture scene in *THE DOGS OF WAR*. Two days before New Year's, Smith attended a meeting with Irvin, Whitlock, Burt Weissbourd and storyboard artist Joe Hurley, among others. "It was only at that meeting that John Irvin started to outline what had to be done."

In addition to the flesh disintegration effect and a stunt dummy of Douglas Fairbanks Jr. (which Bob Brown had also informed him of a few months back), Irvin wanted Smith to devise a couple of "drowned corpse" apparitions—half-real, half-imaginary visions of horror that send David Wanderley (Craig Wasson) out of the window of his New York high rise, and Edward Wanderley (Fairbanks) over the side of a bridge spanning a frozen Milburn river.

"It was the usual production meeting where a lot of ideas are kicked around and no real resolution takes place," Smith said. A dummy head was the obvious solution for the disintegrating-flesh trick, but Smith felt strongly about using dummies for the apparitions, as well. "You can do anything you want with a dummy," Smith explained. "If you have to put the stuff on a person's face, you have limitations."

Of one thing Irvin was certain: that the skin of a corpse dead for 50 years at the bottom of a pond should look black. Irvin apparently had seen a person who'd been drowned, and the skin had gone all black. Smith argued that the connection between Alice Krige's light, delicate features and a blackened, bloated corpse wouldn't be strong enough.

But Smith wasn't sure just how a drowned corpse *should* look, and early in 1981 paid a visit to the New York City Medical Examiner's office. "I found out that though there is a stage at which discoloration can occur in the capillaries. It can range anywhere from a pink flush to a very deep purplish color, like a black and blue mark that's spread over the face. It can be in patches, or it can be continuous. So John had seen the most extreme example of that particular

phase."

Based on this information and a life mask of Alice Krige, Smith proceeded to make "three-dimensional sketches" in wax and clay, showing the corpse's face in different degrees of decay. He sent Polaroids to Irvin, who accepted the concept, though it was markedly different from what he originally had in mind. "I was fortunate in that he liked the ideas I came up with better than his own and immediately gave me approval," Smith said. "I was able to do what I thought was best."

Smith envisioned two head-and-shoulder dummies constructed of foam latex and reinforced with polyurethane foam to keep the shoulders from sagging, fitted with articulated polyester resin jaws. Smith would be able to give the dummies limited facial and jaw movements by sliding an arm up inside the hollow center and operating them

like a conventional hand puppet. Since the apparitions would be seen only briefly, Smith felt that eye movement would be unnecessary.

The apparition designed for the New York high rise, the Number One head, was based on Alice Krige's own features. But the puppet for the bridge apparition—the Number Two head, as Smith refers to it—was in such an advanced state of decay, Smith simply created the head to fit the skull he was working on. "It had to be soaking wet and have water streaming down everything—out of her eyes, nose, mouth and ears," said Smith, noting that Irvin wanted it to appear that the corpse had just risen out of the water. "We were limited by the fact that a whole arm had to be inside the neck in order to operate this thing. There wasn't much room for tubing."

By the time Smith was given the go-ahead on his "sketches," the

scheduled date for shooting the first makeup effects was rapidly approaching. Toward the end of January, the crew was to head for Woodstock, Vermont for exterior photography—including the apparent suicide of Edward Wanderley—so Smith needed to complete both the dummy and life mask of Fairbanks, and the apparition that sends him over the bridge to the ice below. Though Smith had already enlisted the aid of Carl Fullerton for the Fairbanks dummy (Fullerton also assisted him on *ALTERED STATES*, as well as handling makeup effects for *FRIDAY THE 13—PART II* and *THE WOLFEN* on his own), there was not enough time to complete the bridge apparition, and it was later filmed during postproduction at Universal City, optically composited with a background plate taken on location.

However, when it came time to film the dummy in action in Ver-

mont, the production was behind schedule and the sequence was all but scrapped. The only shot involving the dummy was a group of firemen raising the body from the ice in a sling, a shot also missing from early previews of the film.

Smith eventually completed the bridge apparition, and rushed to meet a February deadline for the New York apparition, a slightly-less deformed corpse with rotting skin and a bulging eye. Ultimately, filming of the two dummies was delayed until postproduction. "The whole schedule was getting changed daily," Smith lamented, though he noted the changes gave him time to perfect the makeup concept he was originally hired to do—Eva Galli's disintegrating flesh.

Somewhere along the line Irvin's concept for the closing shot had changed. Rather than simply having a figure pour out of the car in a torrent

Creating the stuff nightmares are made of

Dick Smith grimaces while manipulating one of the corpse apparitions he built for *GHOST STORY*. The head was photographed only a few weeks before the film was due to open, and replaced the "nightmare apparition" designed for Melvyn Douglas' death scene. Smith, given only a few days to prepare for the reshoot, modified the apparition used for Douglas Fairbanks' encounter with Eva Galli on a Milburn bridge (see page 37). The "modifications" included worms, maggots and assorted vermin that were placed in the apparition's mouth a matter of inches away from Smith's right hand—which might account for Smith's anxious glare. The puppet was also rigged to have yellow goo flow from the mouth (inset), supplied by an unidentified effects technician armed with a small hand pump.



of ice water, Irvin wanted a bigger shock. "John wanted to see one person open one door, look in the back and see this figure seated there. Then he wanted Fred Astaire to open the other door, and he wanted the figure to lurch out at him in such a way that you wouldn't really know whether the thing was alive or whether it was just falling." This sudden shock was to be followed by a close-up of the face disintegration effect in the snow.

Smith and Fullerton decided a stunt double in appliance makeup would be the best approach for shots involving the figure seated in the car. A dummy head would be used for the close-ups and disintegration. As Fullerton and Smith went to work in Smith's basement workshop in Larchmont, the big question was *how* was it going to work?

The first approach involved gelatin appliances molded over a heat-resistant skull which contained a built-in heating unit. The gelatin would be placed over a layer of grease, which would help it slide away. It sounded fine in theory, but it didn't work. Smith couldn't find a suitable material for the skull, which had to conduct heat well, but neither distort nor turn black when the tiny heating elements were turned on. They tried embedding soldering tips into a skull made of high-temperature epoxy, but were unable to control the effect well enough.

"It wasn't impossible," Smith insisted, "but it could have easily taken us a couple of months to refine it until it worked to our satisfaction. That seemed to be excessive in terms of the cost."

Eventually, the right combination of materials and procedures was hit upon (see sidebar, page 38). Adding to the effect that the flesh is leaving Eva Galli's corpse, both eyeballs were designed to collapse into the skull. "That was the only thing I could think of to empty the eyeball sockets," Smith said. "Since the skull is lying on its back, you couldn't have the eyeball kind of jump out and roll down the side of the skull!"

The eyes are actually small sacs made out of flexible vinyl, filled with water tinted a purplish gray with watercolors. The eyes were attached with thin plastic tubes to a 60cc syringe; when the handle of the syringe was pulled, the eye fluid was removed, and the sacs slipped down into the skull. "To make these little sacs look more real and interesting, we surrounded them with a kind of yellowish goo in the eyeball socket," Smith said. "We also put a little gelatinous blob in the center, like a whitish fish eye. It looked very viscous, wet and flesh-like."

The lack of snow and cold weather which had plagued the main production unit forced the postponement of the sequence from mid-February to the completion of location photography in mid-March. "We had a car in the bottom of a pond in Saratoga," explained producer Burt Weissbourd, "but it didn't freeze over. We had to take the car out and put it in another pond at a location about two hours away, where, luckily, there was still snow and the altitude was high enough for the lake to freeze over."

Even with the extra weeks, Smith and Fullerton only had time to shoot one 16mm test of the "disintegrating flesh." With "high hopes, but great fears," they packed up their gear and went on location. Scenes with the stunt double were completed earlier in the week, but the actual shot of the flesh falling off the skull had been left for March 16—the final day of winter photography. The next day, the cast and crew were headed for Florida to film Don Wanderley's relationship with Alma Mobley.

"The day of the effect was hair-raising,"

cameras, one of the appliances stuck and one monofilament broke. "Other than that," Smith laughed, "it went beautifully. Carl and I were distraught because everything hadn't gone perfectly, but everyone else was convinced that it looked great, so we never did a second take."

During the course of production, Smith was handed another assignment: an apparition that would frighten Dr. John Jaffrey (Melvyn Douglas) to death. In the script, Jaffrey is frantically looking through his supplies for a vial of morphine to relieve the pain of his illness, but his

an exact three-dimensional version of a Bacon painting—which he didn't think would work anyway—Smith designed an original apparition that still managed to retain the flavor of Bacon.

The "nightmare apparition" features a naked torso and bright red hair. But the face is featureless, save for a gaping, black maw of a mouth, and the subtle suggestion of skull-like depressions under the surface. "To have that absolutely hideous, nightmarish face come up out of that forest of beautiful hair is going to be a terrible shock," Smith said.

As originally conceived, the camera would zoom in on the huge mouth, going inside and down the throat to a cataclysmic eruption of Jaffrey's heart. The exploding heart would dissolve to a shot of Douglas lying dead in his office, and then fade out. The scene was strikingly similar to the proposed "down-the-throat" sequence in *ALTERED STATES*, on which both Smith and production illustrator Joe Hurley had worked—a sequence that never made it into the final film. Smith's faceless "nightmare apparition" was doomed to meet the same fate in *GHOST STORY*: late in the editing stage, the entire sequence was dramatically revised.

But before deciding to drop it entirely, Irvin decided to try to optically enhance Smith's makeup, beyond the simple matter of compositing footage into the black velvet throat. Universal effects veterans Al Whitlock and Mel Arnold had experimented with using flexible, reflective mylar to distort the image, among other exotic techniques, but on Whitlock's recommendation, Irvin turned to Peter Kuran's Visual Concepts Engineering (VCE), responsible for animation and roto-scope effects for *THE HOWLING*, *FEAR NO EVIL*, and *DRAGONSLAYER*. In addition to the "nightmare apparition," Irvin asked Kuran to optically enhance most of the other appearances of Smith's makeup effects.

"I asked John Irvin if he wanted to see a sample reel," said Kuran, who also handled animation roto-scope chores for *THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK*. "He said, 'No, that's okay. The stuff we're looking for you probably haven't done anyway!'" Kuran's job was to try to make Smith's makeup look more "alive," to try and capture more of the distorted feeling of the paintings of Francis Bacon.

"They wanted to augment her look by having the makeup sort of bubble and melt," Kuran said. "That's a tough request, considering it's already on film. Usually, when you try to add something to makeup, it looks like something's been added on. But I think we were able to augment the makeup and make it look like it was probably done on the set as they were shooting it. It's pretty subtle, but it's there."

VCE used several techniques on the footage of Smith's makeup, including an innovative process dubbed "three-dimensional roto-scoping." Rather than projecting footage frame-by-frame onto a flat surface and tracing some kind of animation drawing or matte, frames of

"If you keep looking at an effect as an individual shot until you get it right, and then you cut it into the movie, you might have a good looking shot but it might not fit the film."

—Peter Kuran



An unidentified actress (not Alice Krige) reaches out to Fred Astaire in a nightmare sequence. The intentionally-distorted shot was executed by Peter Kuran. Like most of his other contributions, the shot was eliminated during final editing.

ing for both of us," Smith said. "We had to work in a Winnebago, which is tough. There's no real floor space where you can operate properly." Smith and Fullerton began assembling the device before lunch, but ran into problems: the wire pins were cutting through the appliances. And by the time the appliances were reinforced and the head was ready, the camera crew was busy elsewhere.

"We didn't finally get it in the snow with the camera set and ready until about 4 p.m. on a wintry day with the light fading fast!" Smith exclaimed. "This was virtually the last hour of the last day!"

Three people were required to operate the device: Smith and Fullerton pulled the various pins and monofilament wires; and Bob Jiras, *GHOST STORY*'s general makeup artist, worked the eyeball syringe. During the one and only take for the

supplies have vanished. While his housemaid calls for an ambulance, Jaffrey hears a woman's voice. He looks up to see Eva Galli, naked, her long red hair covering her face. "Eva," he whispers. She flips her hair back, revealing a face that literally frightens him to death as his consciousness is actually sucked into the core of her being and his heart explodes (see sidebar, opposite page).

"I had already established three fairly realistic corpse-like apparitions," Smith said. "I felt that I had pretty much covered a range for that sort of look. It occurred to me that it would be appropriate to do something else for this scene."

Smith and Irvin had been impressed by the nightmarish paintings of Francis Bacon, especially those emphasizing the mouth as a terrible, frightening thing: open, screaming and blurred. But instead of sculpting

One Horrific Apparition You Won't See

Although scrapped during editing, this nightmarish vision is among the most startling ever created for a horror film.

Of all the apparitions filmed for *GHOST STORY*, perhaps the most terrifying of all does not appear in the final print. Dubbed the "nightmare apparition," it was designed for Melvyn Douglas' fatal encounter with the ghost of Eva Galli.

In a departure from the various "rotted corpse" apparitions he had already designed, makeup artist Dick Smith opted for a more surrealistic approach (top right), combining an erotic body with a hideous face devoid of any features, save for a huge, gaping mouth filled with rotting teeth and the suggestion of a skull underneath.

The body of the apparition was based on a life cast of actress Alice Krige, and Smith based the flowing red hair on hers, as well. Since the dummy had a full torso (unlike the other puppet heads), Carl Fullerton had to lie flat on a small table with his entire arm stretched inside to operate it (below right).

The sequence begins with a shot of the naked woman standing before Melvyn Douglas (sequence, top left), the long, lustrous hair obscuring her face. As the hair is whipped back, the face is revealed, the mouth snaps open around, the apparition screams and the camera plunges into and down the apparition's throat. Since it was impossible for Fullerton to both flip up the head and open the mouth at the same time ("It took too much finger muscle," Smith said), the huge mouth was spring loaded to fly open when a cable was released. The constant stretching of the mouth caused one annoying problem: the paint began to peel from the dummy's neck and face. "It was a bitch," Smith said. "We were constantly retouching it, patching it up and repainting it."

As the camera starts its zoom into the mouth—which Smith had lined with black velvet to aid the optical compositing—the throat-like tunnel is revealed. At the recommendation of both Al Whitlock and Universal effects cameraman Bill Taylor, director John Irvin turned the unusual "down-the-throat" sequence over to Peter Kuran's Visual Concepts Engineering (VCE).

Kuran built a large foam rubber "throat" 15 feet long and one foot wide, and modified a camera to travel inside it. To create what appears to be an exploding heart (fifth frame of sequence), nitrous oxide bubbles were pumped through an oily substance and lit to give the illusion of depth. When the bubbles burst, the "heart" seems to explode.

In addition to the "throat"



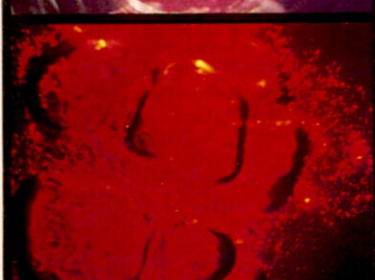
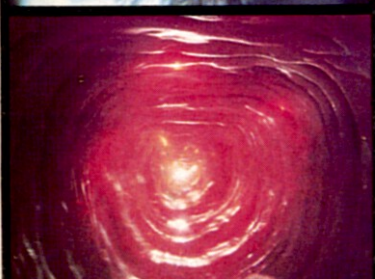
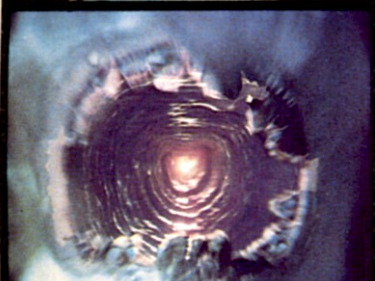
sequence, Kuran worked to modify the look of the apparition itself. Among the different techniques explored, Kuran optically "smeared" the original footage with filters and matted out the hair and background (sequence, bottom left), recombining the result with the original photography. In the top two frames of the sequence shown, Kuran attempted to insert a metallic sheen to the makeup using mattes like the one below, but had difficulty in achieving a precise lineup.

Ultimately, it didn't matter. Following a round of preview screenings in October, Irvin scrapped the entire sequence because he felt it no longer fit in with the look of the rest of the film's makeup effects, a move that disappointed Kuran and puzzled Dick Smith.

"Everyone who has ever seen the head or photos of it thought it was terrifying," said Smith. "Maybe they thought it was a cheat. Maybe they thought I had literally glued something over someone's eyes and had them open their mouth."

"Possibly everyone was attuned to seeing decay," he added, "and this came out of left field. This is more of a nightmare than a corpse. Maybe the terror was diluted by people saying, 'Where did this come from?'"

In actuality, that's pretty close to what happened. When preview audiences asked that question, Irvin couldn't come up with a good answer, so he had Smith create a new apparition for the quick insert needed (see page 33).



Smith's apparitions were projected onto large clay heads. Katherine Kean sculpted the clay to match the original photography—in effect, doing a bit of clay animation to make the flesh appear to move. The distorted clay image was then re-photographed and recombined with the original footage.

Another technique involved actually dissolving away part of the film emulsion, making the image appear to melt. Both the melted frames and clay sculptures were combined with the original footage on the optical printer. By using the proper mattes, Kuran was able to maintain an "ordinary" background, making it seem that only the central subject was undergoing some form of transformation.

The process was used for both the "nightmare apparition" as well as the apartment apparition, for which Kuran also darkened the puppet's eyes and added a pinpoint glow, achieved through more conventional rotoscoping techniques.

Kuran and VCE worked on several other sequences for GHOST STORY. For Smith's climactic flesh disintegration effect, Kuran used the "three-dimensional rotoscoping" technique to add movement to the flesh. In addition, he superimposed the image of Eva Galli's face over the skull as the flesh slides off. Her eyes open as the flesh starts to slide off, then close as the image fades from the skull.

"We made the eyes prominent over the skull, which looked kind of neat," Kuran said. The original photography of Alice Krige's face "didn't really match that well" to the position of the skull, he added. "We had to do a lot of repositioning in the optical printer to be able to match that."

Kuran also redesigned and photographed part of a dream sequence involving Ricky Hawthorne (Fred Astaire), based on a portion of the Straub novel: Hawthorne wakes up to find himself in bed, immobilized, in the old Galli house. The door to the bedroom opens, and something comes in. In the original footage, a figure of a woman comes through the door. After experimenting with a variety of nebulous shapes, Kuran returned to the original concept, but in a flashier form: heavily backlit with swirling smoke, and greatly distorted, achieved by shooting the image in a flexible mylar mirror.

Kuran's work on GHOST STORY was completed in mid-October with an 18-hour marathon lab session spent compositing all the elements. "It was getting real close to the deadline," Kuran said, "so Universal just stepped in and said, 'Look, let's do whatever it takes to get it done.'" James Hagedorn, who did the actual compositing, held the lab open overnight so that testing and re-compositing could be done within the space of a few hours, avoiding the normal delays that occur when film isn't returned until the next day.

But despite the strenuous, last-minute effort, when the completed footage was turned over to Irvin, the director was not satisfied, and nearly all of Kuran's optical work was scrapped.

From the start of the GHOST STORY project, John Irvin knew he wanted to create a logical horror film, giving all the images some rational backing—not an easy chore for a novel so firmly rooted in the supernatural. Trying to best capture his personal vision of ultimate horror, Irvin let the screenplay and storyline evolve right up until the final editing of the film. Several scenes were written and filmed, only to be discarded during editing.

"We've eliminated everything from the film we felt wasn't essential to the

Hawthorne's nightmare, in which Fred Astaire lies helplessly on a bed in Eva Galli's house as a strange presence comes after him; and a wake for John Jaffrey, which featured the late Melvyn Douglas reposed in an open coffin.

But many more scenes were excised because of Irvin's insistence on a coherent narrative. Many startling effects—particularly those executed by Peter Kuran—were dumped because they didn't conceptually fit with the rest of the film. Likewise, Irvin has completely eliminated Dick Smith's stunning, faceless "nightmare appa-



Whatever happened to Fenny Bate? "He survived," explained director John Irvin. "But as to where he is today, I wouldn't know."

Gregory Bate (Miguel Fernandez, right) and Fenny Bate (Lance Holcomb) confront Fred Astaire in the ruins of the Eva Galli house. The pair are in league with Galli, who has promised them immortality for their aid. Fenny, a feral child, wears some of Galli's old clothes. In the novel, they were supernatural beings, but have become more earthbound in the film version.

story of these characters," producer Burt Weissbourd explained. "The first cut was longer than we wanted, and we felt very strongly that the film should be no more than two hours long. It's a very intense experience."

For example, Irvin scrapped a poltergeist attack against the Milburn farm on which Eva Galli is buried. The sequence was designed to show the range of powers at the disposal of Eva Galli's ghost, and was, in many ways, similar to the scene in THE EXORCIST where the furniture in Linda Blair's room starts flying around. But it was a scene Irvin felt could easily be cut.

"I hate superfluous scenes," Irvin said. "I'm ruthless when I edit. But the main line of the narrative remains unchanged. It's like I'm taking out the adjectives and just leaving the verbs."

Several other sequences were dropped for length, including Ricky

rition," and the optical "down-the-throat" sequence.

"I felt the [nightmare] apparition just wasn't consistent with the others," Irvin said. "It's out of tune with what's come before."

Irvin wanted to maintain the "rotting corpse" look of Smith's first two dummy heads. The sudden appearance of Smith's decidedly surrealistic apparition reportedly confused early preview audiences. "People looked at it and asked, 'Why is it like that?'" said Irvin, a week after the first previews were held.

Irvin was also unsatisfied with the results of Kuran's "down-the-throat" sequence. "It was a good try, but it wasn't entirely convincing," Irvin noted. "Again, it was inconsistent. I'll save that one for another film."

At press time, all of Kuran's footage had been eliminated, with the exception of some of the 3-D rotoscoping

executed for the first apparition. But even that may be deleted by the time editing is complete, Irvin said.

Kuran was understandably disappointed that his work was scrapped, and more than a bit miffed. "From the first day that I met John Irvin, I wanted to see the film, so I would know what it was about," Kuran said. "I don't know, maybe they purposely wanted to keep me in the dark. If I had gotten to see the film, I would have had a much better idea of how this stuff would fit in."

According to Kuran, part of the problem was the short time allotted and a lack of feedback. "For THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK, I had a year to work. For DRAGONSLAYER, I had six months. In this case, there wasn't much time to do anything," Kuran said. "On DRAGONSLAYER, I'd hand something in and they'd call me back with a page of corrections that they'd like to see. With the GHOST STORY people, they'd run it a few times on the editing bench, wind it back up, hand it to you, and say, 'Looks like it's coming along just fine. Keep going.' That doesn't help me out at all!"

Kuran again made reference to his tenure on DRAGONSLAYER, where his rough effects footage was immediately cut into the film and judged in a proper context. "The GHOST STORY people would wait until you gave them footage they thought was acceptable to cut into the movie," he said. "If you keep looking at it as an individual shot until you get it right, and then you cut it into the movie, you might have a good looking shot but it might not fit the film." Which is precisely what happened.

Although Kuran was upset that his work was scrapped, he was somewhat philosophical about it. "It doesn't bother me much when I think that Dick Smith's makeups were thrown out left and right, and Al Whitlock's work was thrown out left and right," he said. "I feel honored that my stuff is being thrown out too."

Even though Irvin was determined to cut the film as tightly as possible, reactions to the previews convinced him that some new shock footage was still needed. Although Irvin felt the overall response was good ("There were almost no walk-outs," he said. "And girls between the ages of 17 and 25 are screaming"), he felt there was enough time and money to do better.

An eleventh-hour call was placed to Dick Smith, who had just completed work on the makeup effects for DEATH BITE, a Canadian film about particularly nasty serpents. Irvin needed two new ghostly apparitions designed, built, tested and ready to film in a matter of days. Could Smith arrange his schedule to do it? He could.

The first of the heads was designed for Melvyn Douglas' death scene, a replacement for the faceless "nightmare apparition." At Irvin's suggestion, Smith modified the Number Two head originally used for Douglas Fairbanks' death scene. He removed the eyeballs, gave the skin more of a decayed appearance and rigged the plastic tubes (originally designed to allow water to spew from the

Transforming Alice Krige Into A Corpse:

Dick Smith's puppet heads and Peter Kuran's optical effects contribute to two ghostly apparitions.

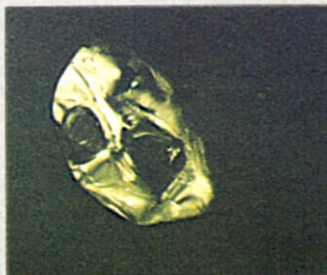
Peter Straub's *Ghost Story* carefully avoided any descriptions of what shapeshifter Alma Mobley really looked like, but director John Irvin didn't have the luxury of metaphor—he had to show something.

Irvin turned to makeup veteran Dick Smith, who designed several "corpse apparitions"—including these two, seen early in the film—based on real drowning victims. Instead of using appliances on actress Alice Krige, Smith built two hand puppets, featuring articulated jaws, lifelike hair and fixed eyes.

The "Number One" head (**top right**) appears in a scene between Alma Mobley (Krige) and David Wanderley (Craig Wasson), set in a New York high-rise. "The head was done in a tremendous rush," said Smith. "We used the first one that came out of the mold. The foam latex was a little rigid. It was not a perfect mask, but it was usable."

The scene was eventually delayed until postproduction. "If we had only known, we could have taken our time and made it over again," Smith said. "But as long as it works, it works!"

Footage of the scene was later turned over to Peter Kuran's Visual Concepts Engineering (VCE), to optically make the makeup look "alive." Kuran used an innovative process he dubbed "three-dimensional" rotoscoping (**sequence, top**) Kuran projected the footage onto a clay head, which was modified frame by frame by Katherine Kean to give "movement" to the makeup—a bit of postproduction clay animation. A camera was aligned with the projector, rephotographing the footage



directly off the clay. The image could then be manipulated in a number of ways, including color variations and distortions achieved with reflective mylar (**center**).

The footage was then re-inserted into the background of the shot through the use of conventional hand-drawn mattes that allowed the dummy's eyes to remain as originally photographed on the set. However, in the final composite (not shown) Susan Turner darkened the eyes and added a pinpoint glow.

Dick Smith built a second puppet head of Alma Mobley (**below left**) for the death of Edward Wanderley (Douglas Fairbanks, Jr.). This so-called "bridge apparition" was filmed against a blue screen during postproduction, composited with a background plate shot on location. That's Smith, barely visible in the corner, operating the puppet.

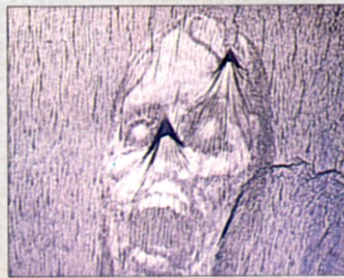
Since water had to stream down the face of the apparition, Smith designed a series of built-in tubes, connected to a hand pump, with

outlets at the eyes, ears, nose and along the scalp. To create a cascade of water coming out of the mouth, a separate tube was hooked to a large receptacle of water. When the shot was first attempted, the stream of water hit the roof of the mouth, "then appeared from behind the upper teeth in a 'curtain effect,'" according to Smith. "There's still a lot of water coming out of the mouth, but not the staggering torrent I thought there would be."

Footage of the Number Two head was also turned over to VCE for optical work. One technique explored involved dissolving the emulsion of the film (**sequence, left**)—making the image appear to melt—supervised by chemical specialist Doug Shinaman.

Though Kuran was not responsible for the final compositing of the effect—a job turned over to Al Whitlock and the Universal optical department—he had to create the hand-drawn mattes that would insert the "melted" image into the normal background. As the shot progressed, the face became more and more nebulous, and the rotoscoped mattes more difficult to execute. "It was a real bitch," Kuran complained. "It's an extreme amount of trouble. It was like rotoscoping clouds!"

Ultimately, John Irvin decided to scrap most of Kuran's work for being inconsistent with the look of the film—though Kuran claimed it wasn't his fault, since he was never shown the scenes his effects were to be inserted into.





Disintegrating a Corpse's Face

Dick Smith pulls it off on the last day of shooting.

The climax of *GHOST STORY* features the rotted corpse of Eva Galli exhumed from its watery grave in an effort to exorcise its evil spirit. The script called for the rotting corpse to be seated in the back of the car it was buried in, and to tumble out onto the snow when Ricky Hawthorne (Fred Astaire) opens the door. The skin on its face would then slither away, leaving the skull gleaming white.

Originally, Smith planned to use false heads for the entire sequence. But director John Irvin wanted to see the corpse's entire body inside the car, so Smith fitted Loretta Scott with a latex mask (**bottom, right**—note eyes), designed to match the more elaborate puppet head (**left**, as seen through the car's dirty window).

It took Smith and assistant Carl Fullerton several weeks to devise a workable method to allow the flesh to fall off the dummy head on cue. Six separate gelatinous appliances (**center**, shown both on and off the face, as Smith begins assembly) were arranged over a layer of "Alco-gel," a thick, stringy liquid. For each appliance, two or three tiny wires were fed inside the hollow head, and protruded slightly through the underside of the skull, anchoring the pieces of flesh. When the cables were pulled back, the appliances were free to move, and a gentle tug on monofilament fishing line separated the flesh from the skull.

The large syringe (seen **center, top**) extracted colored water that filled the soft, plastic eyes. When the water was removed, the vinyl sacs would slip down into the skull, making it seem as though they had vanished. "I thought that was one of the better touches of the effect," said Smith.

Poor weather conditions—it wasn't cold enough for the pond the car was buried in to freeze over—delayed the filming of the actual flesh disintegration effect until the very last hour of the last day of location photography. Just prior to filming, Smith checked the puppet one final time (**bottom, left**). The cables leading from the puppet were numbered so the different appliances could be made to slither away in the right sequence.

Finally, late in the afternoon with the light fading, the head went before the cameras, for its one and only take (**sequence, top**). Not everything had worked as planned—one of the monofilaments had broken, for example—but John Irvin was satisfied.

However, late in postproduction, Peter Kuran was hired to optically enhance the flesh disintegration effect through a variety of techniques. In one, he superimposed actress Alice Krige's face over the skull with eerie results (see page 21, **bottom**). However, Irvin ultimately decided to let Smith's makeup remain as originally photographed.



dummy's head) to deliver a thick, yellow goo from the eyes and mouth. Since Irvin wanted to show the progressing decomposition, he decided to spice up Smith's new makeup with a box of earthworms, leeches, maggots and slugs, inserting them in the eyes and mouth of the apparition's head to mix with the yellow goo.

"It wasn't my idea," Smith joked. "I think it's a little much. I don't know, of course, which shots they'll use in the film. It may be that they'll pick a sequence that isn't quite as gross as some of them were."

Smith was also asked to come up with a completely new apparition to fit Irvin's revised concept for the film's climax—an encounter between Don Wanderley (Craig Wasson) and the ghost of Eva Galli. In the film, Wanderley has broken his leg while exploring the Galli house with Ricky Hawthorne (Astaire) and Sears James (Houseman). While driving for help, James sees a vision of Eva Galli standing on the road [see page 22], swerves, and is killed by Fenny and Gregory Bate, who suddenly appear in the back seat. In an effort to exorcise Eva Galli's malignant spirit, Hawthorne departs to raise the car she was buried in, leaving Wanderley alone.

In early versions, Wanderley's dead twin brother appears to him in a decidedly un-real situation, reminiscent of the "waking dreams" in the Straub novel. But audiences weren't satisfied. "During preview screenings," producer Burt Weissbourd explained, "we found that people really demanded a confrontation between Alma and Don."

So for the final, one-on-one confrontation between good and evil, Irvin decided to have Alma Mobley descend the stairs dressed as a beautiful bride in white, reach out to the crippled Wanderley and caress him, revealing her true self as she pulls her veil aside.

Given almost no time to prepare a new apparition, Smith worked with several items he had on hand: a real human skull, plus parts from a plastic model; a old foam latex mask designed for Blair Brown's "anatomy suit," a makeup concept designed for ALTERED STATES but scrapped during editing [see 11:16]; and miscellaneous tubing, hardware and dental plastic. He combined them to come up with a skull-like head with peeling flesh, rigged with tubes to pump slime and controlled like a hand-puppet, like the other heads used in the film.

"It came out quite neat," Smith said proudly. "It looks like we spent more time on it than we actually did."

Irvin decided that this apparition should also be riddled with maggots, and spread them over the dummy's head. Unfortunately for Smith, some of the maggots crawled into the nooks and crannies of the corpse dummy, and along the built-in tubing down to his arm and wrist. Apparently all the shocks in GHOST STORY aren't confined to the screen.

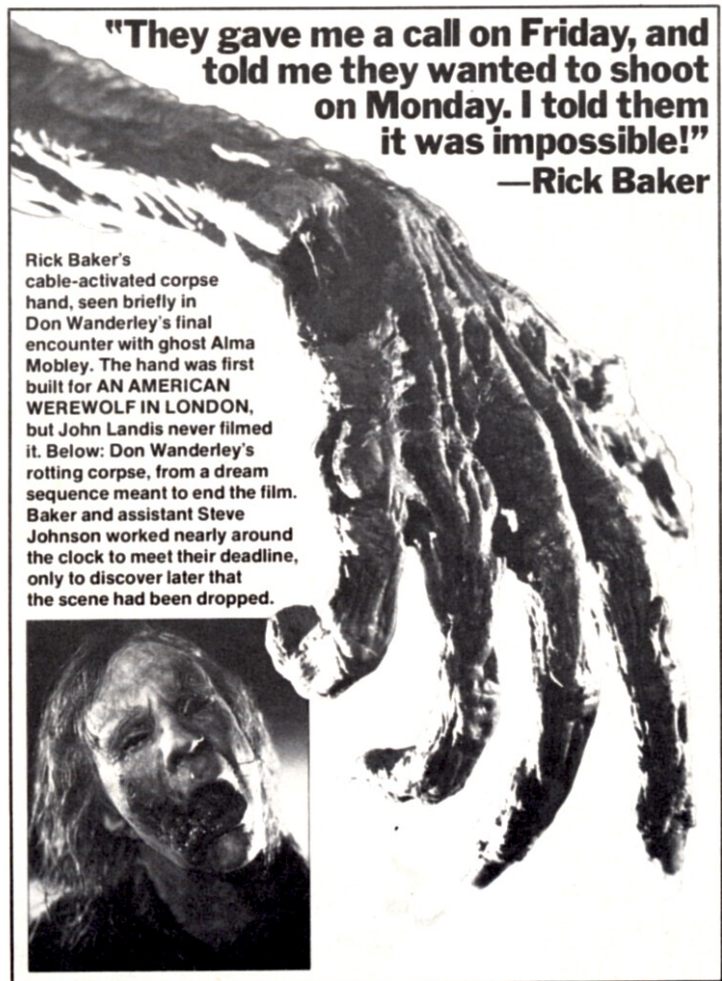
Irvin also wanted an insert of Eva Galli's hand brushing against Don Wanderley's face—a dead, decayed hand—and turned to makeup artist Rick Baker because Smith was too

busy. Baker happened to have just what the director ordered: an intricately-articulated, cable-controlled hand designed for the filming of AN AMERICAN WEREWOLF IN LONDON, but never seen on screen. "It's the same hand I used for Griffin Dunne," Baker said. "I made longer nails, built up more on the back of the hand, dug out some more elsewhere, and put new skin on."

"They hardly used the hand for anything on GHOST STORY," Baker added. "I was a little disappointed because I spent a lot of time fixing it up."

filmmaking. He decided to end the film with Don Wanderley's departure from Milburn, which precedes the graveyard scene in the script.

"A dream follows him," Irvin explained, "so the suggestion is that he's been marked for life by this experience, and he has inherited a certain aspect of his father's life. When Don is leaving Milburn on a bus, he falls asleep and sees the car being pulled up out of the lake once more. He sees himself appear at the rear window, slightly eaten away—dead. It's quite a jolt. It's a better ending in the sense that it's more elegant. It goes deeper."



"They gave me a call on Friday, and told me they wanted to shoot on Monday. I told them it was impossible!"
—Rick Baker

Rick Baker's cable-activated corpse hand, seen briefly in Don Wanderley's final encounter with ghost Alma Mobley. The hand was first built for AN AMERICAN WEREWOLF IN LONDON, but John Landis never filmed it. Below: Don Wanderley's rotting corpse, from a dream sequence meant to end the film. Baker and assistant Steve Johnson worked nearly around the clock to meet their deadline, only to discover later that the scene had been dropped.



Rick Baker was also involved in the search for an acceptable ending, one of director John Irvin's most frustrating tasks. No less than three different endings were proposed in an effort to come up with a suitable denouement. As outlined in Lawrence D. Cohen's screenplay, the film would end with a tracking shot through a graveyard (similar to Cohen's original opening, in which a graveyard serves as a visual setting to Sears James' story about premature burial). As the camera comes to rest on Sears James' fresh gravestone, Fenny Bate pops into frame, presumably creating a shock akin to the bloody hand at the end of CARRIE (which Cohen credits to director Brian DePalma's "brainstorm").

But Irvin felt the ending didn't tie into the body of the film well enough—didn't fit his "cat's cradle" style of

The sequence was filmed in September, and included in the early previews. Since Smith was still at work on DEATH BITE, Irvin called Baker with the request: a rotted, corpse dummy of Craig Wasson, to be ready for filming in a matter of days. "I got a call on Friday, and they told me they wanted to shoot on Monday!," said Baker. "I said it was impossible. The head couldn't look good in that amount of time."

Craig Wasson was shooting another film at the time, but went to Baker's effects facility on a Sunday where an alginate cast was made of his head. Working nearly around the clock, Baker and assistant Steve Johnson took four days to prepare the head, which had tubes leading to the nose, mouth and eyes from which slime could ooze.

"You're supposed to be able to recognize it as him, so you don't want to

take too much of the face off," Baker explained. "I'm kind of worried about it not looking like him anyway, because Irvin wanted his eyes missing. You take somebody's eyes out and they look different automatically. He's a little bit decomposed, with just a little rot here and there. And no eyes."

But unfortunately for Baker, when the new "dream sequence" ending was previewed, audience reaction was negative and his makeup was discarded. "It was perhaps too cerebral, too intellectual and too eerie," Irvin said. "And audiences felt the ending was too reminiscent of other films, like CARRIE and FRIDAY THE 13TH."

In the most current version, Irvin will intercut between the disintegrating flesh effect and Don Wanderley's confrontation with Eva Galli in the new "bride apparition." But Irvin is hesitant to discuss how he will actually end the film. "It'll be a *frisson*," he laughed. "I hope."

Irvin said he didn't expect his last-minute tinkering with GHOST STORY's editing—including the newly shot makeup effects by Baker and Smith—to add much to the film's \$15 million budget; an estimate by producer Burt Weissbourd pegged the final cost at around \$16 million. But in late October, as this story was being written, Irvin's main worry wasn't financial—he was watching the calendar.

"Obviously, there's a certain urgency," he admitted. "But we want to put the best picture out—nothing less."

For the fans of Straub's novel, nothing less will do. As Stanley Kubrick learned, audiences can be highly critical of even a well-made adaptation of a best-seller if it's not what they've expected. But both Irvin and Lawrence Cohen say GHOST STORY will work and succeed on its own, and that any differences in content and style from Straub's novel will only add to the overall impact.

"M. R. James, the great British exponent of the ghost story, always insisted that logic was self-defeating in telling a ghost story," Irvin said. "I think GHOST STORY is lucid and intelligent, but I also think it will be very frightening. I enjoy having the power over people to make them scream or jump."

Added Cohen: "In adapting the material, our intent was to find the sense of it. We kept an arc of logic and added and subtracted until we created what became a whole new piece—a film, not a book."

For Peter Straub—who has not yet seen any of the footage—such reassurances aren't enough. He is still cautiously waiting to learn the cinematic fate of his most famous book.

"I try not to think about it," Straub said. "The world tells me that it's going to be very, very good and that it's going to have some sort of artistic respectability and a lot of serious scares. That's what the world tells me—but that's precisely what the world told Stephen King about THE SHINING!"

"But if it's good to look at, if it's an intelligent film and it's scary," he added, "then I'll cherish it." □

THE THING

Carpenter's remake takes shape at Universal

By Jordan R. Fox

The place stank. It was a queer, neck ruffling thing, a faintest suggestion of an odor alien among the smells of industry and life. And it was a life-smell. But it came from the thing that lay bound with cord and tarpaulin on the table, dripping slowly...

With those evocative words, the late John W. Campbell, Jr. (writing under the pen name Don A. Stuart) set the scene for an early milestone in science-fiction horror literature. His novella, *Who Goes There?*, marked the apex and very nearly the end of his writing career, as in late 1937—some months before its publication—he began a new career as editor of *Astounding Magazine*.

By 1951, with "flying saucers" intermittently grabbing headlines for years and the Cold War beginning to warm up, it was a perfect time for a modern re-marriage of science fiction and horror—on the screen. Howard Hawks, using the rough outline of Campbell's story, produced (and as we know today, practically directed) *THE THING FROM ANOTHER WORLD* to scare the piss out of early '50s moviegoers.

Once again, a new filmmaking team led by director John Carpenter (*HALLOWEEN*, *THE FOG*), is laboring to do the same for today's audience with *THE THING*, a version that is both an update and a return to the original material discarded by Hawks.

"Why remake the Hawks film?" asked Stuart Cohen, line producer of *THE THING*. "That film was good fun, very well-made and very much of its time. But Hawks must have felt the original story was too complicated, or the effects beyond the film technology of the time, because he never utilized the central concept of the novella. The creature has the ability to assume the exact likeness and behavior of any life form it has consumed. Nor did Hawks use the psychological aspects of Campbell's novel. As much as we like the first film, *this* film—apart from the Antarctic setting—bears very little resemblance to it."

Cohen, who purchased the rights five years ago, is a young producer shepherding his first feature film. But because he felt more clout was needed to place the project with a major studio, Cohen turned to David Foster (of Turman-Foster Productions). Despite Foster's success in securing a development deal with Universal Studios,

THE THING was far from a burning priority. Years of development lay ahead.

Early on, Cohen wanted John Carpenter to direct the film. While a student at the University of Southern California in the early '70s, Cohen had gotten to know Carpenter, and discovered that the Campbell story (and the Hawks film) were also favorites of his. At that time Carpenter's credits (*DARK STAR* and *ASSAULT ON PRECINCT 13*) weren't enough to convince the studio. Kim Henkel and Tobe Hooper had just arrived on the lot for the beginning of their 18-month development contract, and they spent time on *THE THING*. Their script didn't work out, and Cohen wasn't happy with the two other scripts turned in by writers who succeeded them.

"There was a great deal of pressure from the studio to open the story up, have it all happen out on the ice with avalanches and standard action-movie stuff," Cohen recalled. "It was wrong. We tried it anyway. I knew it wouldn't work, and, in fact, it didn't. The project was shelved for a period of time."

Ultimately, what thawed out *THE*

THING and rekindled the studio's interest was the smash success of *ALIEN*. The dark and claustrophobic interiors were similar to atmosphere Cohen wanted for *THE THING*. *ALIEN* proved that horror and science fiction could be successfully blended to make a killing at the box office.

Still, the right director and screenwriter were needed to reactivate the project. Cohen again suggested Carpenter, but even the runaway hit status of *HALLOWEEN* didn't make much difference in his acceptability to the Universal brass.

"What finally clinched it," said Cohen, "was all the highly favorable foreign press on John and his work. For the last couple years, the studio has had films that did well in this country, but Steve Martin or *ANIMAL HOUSE* don't do much overseas. This is one film they can see doing well everywhere, and John's reputation had grown to where they could say 'Yes.'"

To recapture the qualities that had most appealed to them in the original story—claustrophobia, isolation and paranoia—Cohen and Carpenter decided to try a writer new to the

genre. "Bill Lancaster had done only *THE BAD NEWS BEARS* but I considered that a really fresh piece of writing," Cohen said. "Sometimes, instinct is all you have to go on. It turned out he had long wanted to do a story like this. It took him a year and a half to write it, but when the script came in, John said it was the scariest script he'd ever read."

Commented Lancaster: "The story was very challenging to adapt because it's so interior and so expository." Hawks streamlined handling of the story quickly got the audience participating in a fearsome game of hide and seek with a Frankensteinian horror. A return to the source material meant a more deliberate approach grounded in character and psychological suspense, laying the groundwork for the main fear device: that *anyone* could be the monster.

In this version, the research station is civilian rather than military. The characters are contemporary, and a more manageable dozen in number, rather than Campbell's 37. The monster was changed as well from the one envisioned by Campbell. "We eighty-sixed the telepathy," said Lancaster. "We had to find ways to limit the monster. It seems so omnipotent in the story, if it had all those powers the men wouldn't stand a chance."

Much of *THE THING*'s ensemble cast is composed of New York and West Coast actors who have impressive stage credits but little or no prior film experience. Kurt Russell, who was last seen as Snake Plissken in Carpenter's *ESCAPE FROM NEW YORK*, has the main role of McCready.

Preproduction on *THE THING* began in March, with principal photography—nine weeks of interiors sprawled over five Universal soundstages—commencing in late August. Earlier, in June, a week was spent filming snowy vistas on the Juneau Ice Field in Alaska. This scheduling was partly for weather reasons and partly to beat the expected director's strike. This second unit (led by Cohen and Carpenter) briefly found itself snowbound at an actual research outpost under the most primitive conditions.

The 58-day shooting also includes exterior filming at sites constructed in British Columbia before the onset of winter weather. In addition, a six-week period has been set to film the special makeup effects by Richard Bottin (*THE HOWLING*) and Roy Arbogast, which will done between interior and exterior filming.

Producer Stuart Cohen



Special effects makeup expert Rob Bottin (right) and director Carpenter go over a sequence in which an Alaskan huskie is to be digested by the Thing



In depicting the Thing itself, Cohen earnestly asserts that state-of-the-art techniques will provide "a graphic representation beyond anything yet seen on film." The Thing will do its thing on the stage in real time, without recourse to optical enhancement. Cohen acknowledges that this is not quite a *quantum* leap past the transformation technologies of *AMERICAN WEREWOLF IN LONDON* and *THE HOWLING* but an augmentation and extension of them. "We'll be using certain mate-

"Why remake the Hawks film?" said producer Stuart Cohen. "That film was good fun, but never utilized the central concept of Campbell's story."



rial that was not previously available," Cohen said. "Some of it is frankly experimental, and may not work—at first."

Negative cost of the summer '82 release is pegged at \$11.5 million, which should be enough given Carpenter's penchant for getting the money up on the screen. "But just in case it isn't enough," kids Lancaster (Burt Lancaster's son) who had a percentage of the successful *BAD NEWS BEARS* series, "I've offered to loan them another \$5 million . . ." □

Above: The Thing has escaped from its block of ice, as discovered by Kurt Russell (inset top) and Richard A. Dysart.

In the original film (inset right), a nervous guard thoughtlessly covers the ice with an electric blanket to keep from seeing the Thing's staring eyes. Despite these visual parallels Carpenter's film is not a remake, he says.



HEARTBEEPS

Makeup, mechanical effects and sophisticated electronics bring a loveable robot cast to life.

By Kyle Counts

Czech playwright Karel Capek is credited with coining the word robot in his science fiction play, *R.U.R.* (Rossum's Universal Robots), produced circa 1920. The term derives from the Czechoslovakian word "robota," meaning "drudgery, servitude or forced labor." Throughout motion picture history, the robot—a symbol of the world's ever-increasing technological advancement—has been characterized in terms which sociologically reflect both our basic distrust of machinery and our long-harbored resistance to automation. From *METROPOLIS* (1926) to *ALIEN* (1979), robots have taken a firm place in the archives of screen villainy, displaying their superior intelligence, sophisticated hardware and indestructible metals before a planet of naive and emotionally frail human beings.

Of course, there have been kindly exceptions: Robby the Robot in *FORBIDDEN PLANET*; TOBOR THE GREAT; droids Huey, Dewey and Louie in *SILENT RUNNING*; and, of course, C3PO and R2D2. But for every Twiki there was a Hal-9000, or a Box (LOGAN'S RUN), or a Mother (ALIEN), to remind us that as helpful as machines can be, they are, for the most part, cold, calculating artifices that replace feeling with efficiency and threaten the job-security of us all.

PHIL

"As MPI's R&D team quickly discovered, nothing as advanced as this baby robot yet existed—even in the nuclear industry."

HEARTBEEPS, Universal's robot love story due this Christmas, updates the robot genre. John Hill's story focuses on a different kind of robot; a "family" of automatons—Val (Andy Kaufman), a lumber commodities analyst; Aqua (Bernadette Peters), a party hostess companion; Catskill, a joke-a-thon comedian; and Phil, the "baby" built from spare junk parts by Val and Aqua—who set out to explore the "familiar yet slightly futuristic" environs of California in 1995, with a self-contained police unit named Crimebuster hot on their trails. Through a mix of comedy, drama and gentle whimsy, HEARTBEEPS hopes to show us that these robots can be as compelling, expressive and as endearing as R2D2 and CESK's Puck the Alien.

Unquestionably, Phil is the star of the show. Designed and built by Jamie Shourt and Robbie Blalack at MPI's Motion Pictures, Inc. (MPI) effects facility (now de-

funct—the two run separate companies), Phil may be the most sophisticated robot in existence—motion pictures or otherwise. Unlike R2D2, or *SILENT RUNNING*'s drones (also created by Shourt), Phil does not house a little person or bi-lateral amputee. Rather, he is a fully-articulated, 24-channel radio-controlled robot, an all-terrain vehicle with mechanical appendages capable of a variety of subtle movements, among them picking up a live rabbit and slicing through a wire fence. As MPI's research and development crew quickly discovered, nothing so advanced currently existed, even in the nuclear industry.

"We looked at different kind of drive-train mechanisms for Phil," said Max Anderson, who supervised construction at MPI. "Wide rollers with wheels, baby buggies, even a snowmobile." Brainstorming for electro-mechanical solutions produced a low-mass, high-traction drive-system, flexible enough for negotiations over most any terrain.

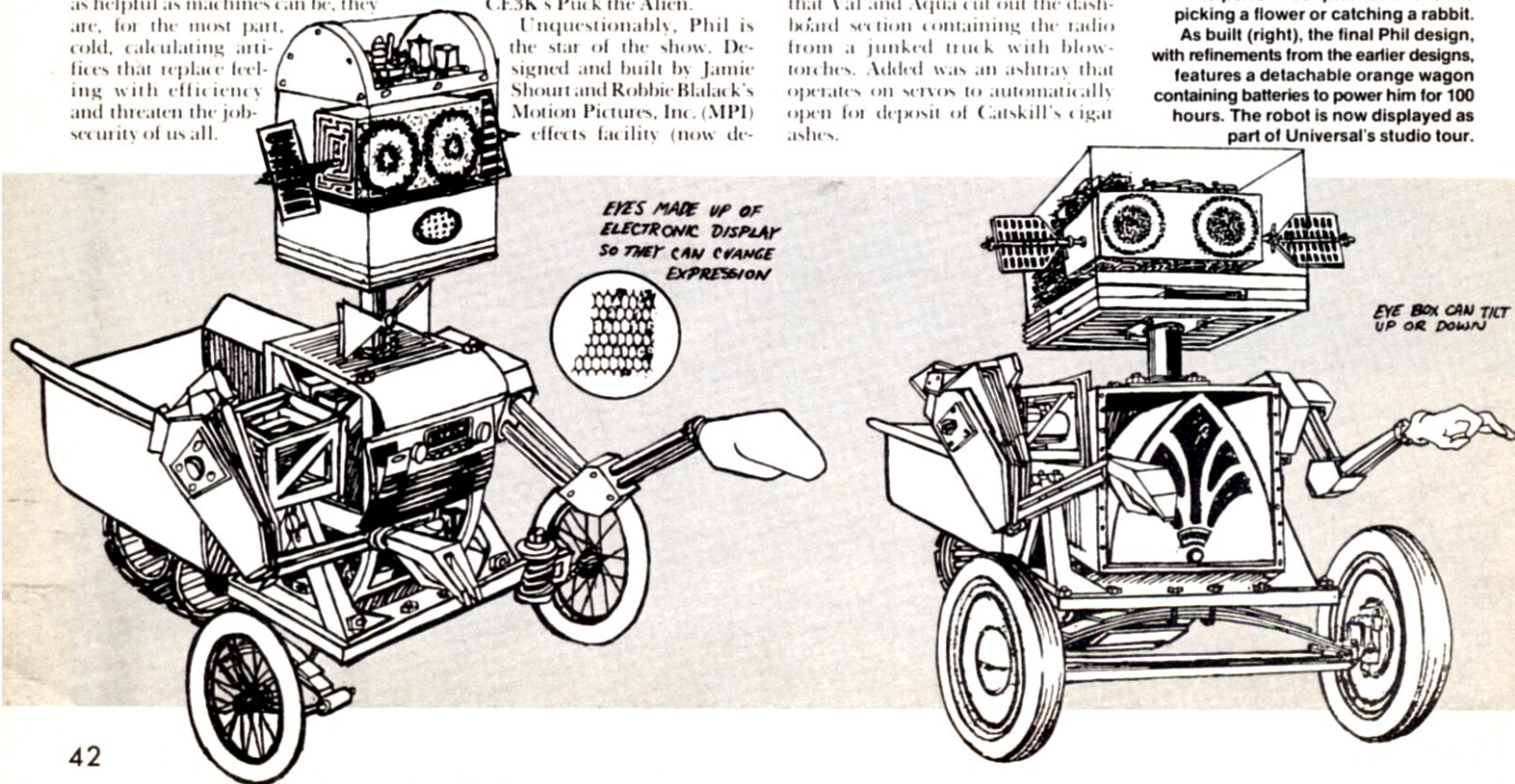
The first sketches for Phil, were rendered by Anderson and based on concepts generated by Shourt and the Universal art department. Named Phil for the Philco car radio that serves as his chest, Shourt had the idea that Val and Aqua cut out the dashboard section containing the radio from a junked truck with blowtorches. Added was an ashtray that operates on servos to automatically open for deposit of Catskill's cigar ashes.

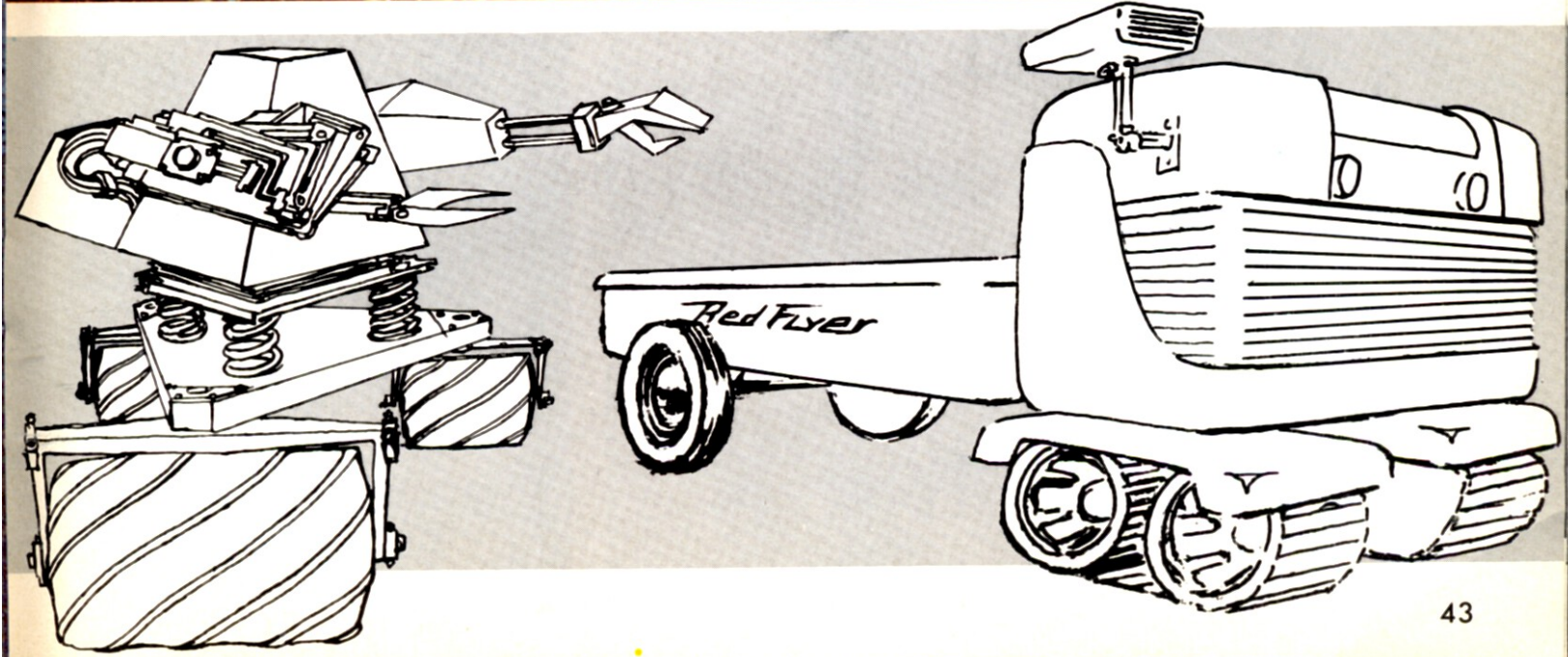
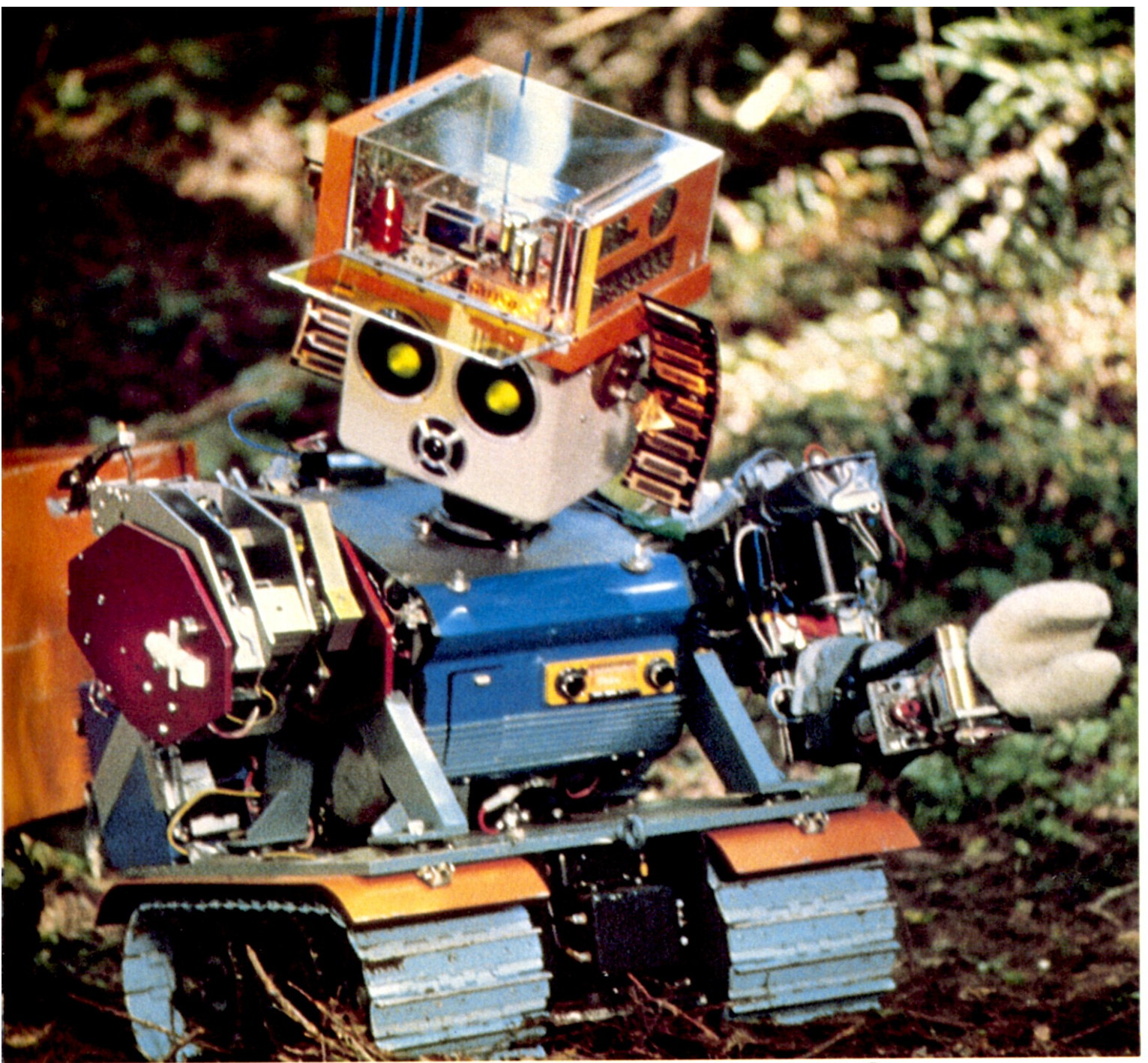
PHIL, the scene-stealing baby robot star of HEARTBEEPS (right), is an actual robot built by Motion Pictures Inc., the defunct partnership of Robbie Blalack and Jamie Shourt. Named for the Philco radio chassis which served as one of its main body parts, the concept for the robot took shape in the drawings (below) of Max Anderson, its MPI designer. From left to right: 1) A concept close to Phil's final design

begins to show the use of elements like the Philco car radio in his chest and mittened hand. The odd assemblage of various components was to suggest his construction from junk and spare parts.

2) This version, also similar to the final design, used an old-fashioned Philco radio, an idea provided by director Alan Arkush. 3) An early design, and Anderson's favorite because of its kinetic possibilities: the head rotates 360° on a stationary carriage; all wheels rotate in the direction of travel; when Phil gets upset his head bounces up and down and spins around; his arms grab and flail at things like a child having a temper tantrum. 4) Max Anderson's first design used an entire Philco radio for the body and to suggest facial features, with a child's red wagon in tandem. The sketch was done before meetings with producer Michael Phillips and director Arkush revealed Phil would need appendages to perform scripted functions like picking a flower or catching a rabbit.

As built (right), the final Phil design, with refinements from the earlier designs, features a detachable orange wagon containing batteries to power him for 100 hours. The robot is now displayed as part of Universal's studio tour.

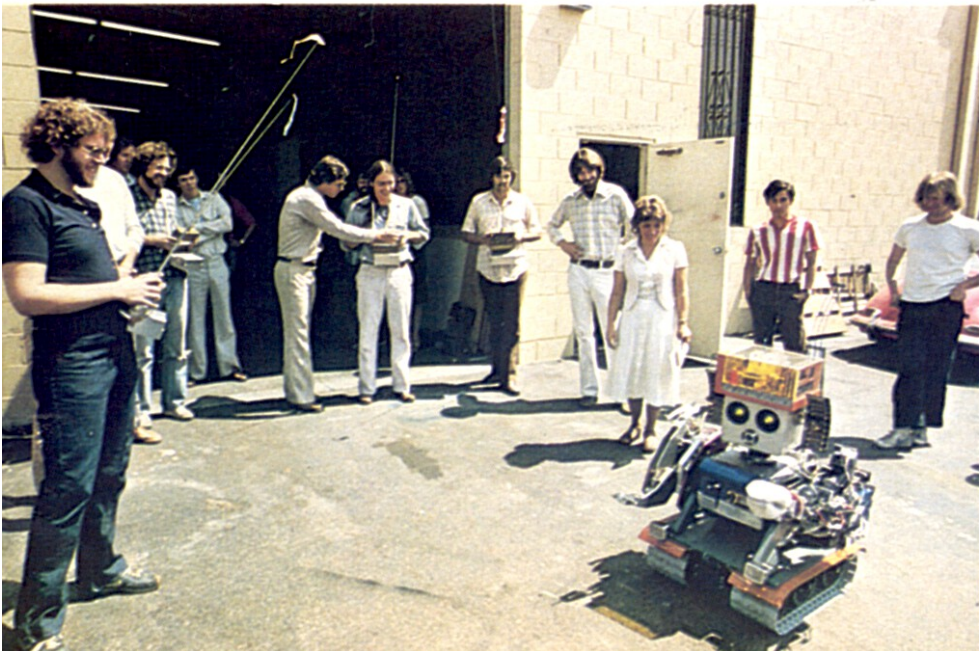






CATSKILL is the "crazy uncle" of a roving family of futuristic robots, a Brooklyn-accented (voice by Jack Carter), Borscht-belt comedian. Comic actor Barry Diamond (inset, with effects men Bill Lee and Bruce Fox) operates the robot's head, arms and mechanized legs from inside. Designed at Universal by artist Bill Major and production designer John Corso, a fully mechanized version was built to give Diamond a much-needed break from his confinement, and a hollow mock-up was used for the robot's "death scene" and when no movement was needed. Universal effects supervisor Mel Arnold operated the radio controls for both units with either Fox or Jack Manning. With Lee, he operated the Stan Winston-designed plexiglass head, including moveable eyelids and brows. Inside, Diamond worked the jaw for joke-timing. The hydraulic legs, made of 1/2" tubular aluminum, were wired to cross and uncross.

PHIL takes his first steps out of doors (left) as the MPI crew give him a test run in their parking lot; operating the four radio control units (l to r) are David Merritt, who designed Phil's transparent brain, and Daryl Dzioba, Ralph Leitzgen, and Neil Dreiseszun who created and assembled Phil's electrical system. In **HEARTBEEPS**, baby Phil is assembled by his robot parents Valcom and Aquacom (Bernadette Peters, right), two robots who fall in love and run away.



Director Arkush took 50 Xeroxed copies of the final design and a box of crayons away with him. "He was seen all over town in restaurants, coloring in copies until he decided on the colors he wanted," laughed Anderson. Arkush envisioned Phil's dashboard in an "LAPD (Los Angeles Police Department) blue," the right arm (shaped like a giant Swiss Army knife) in "Earl Schieb red," and the brain case, wagon and tread casings in shades of orange.

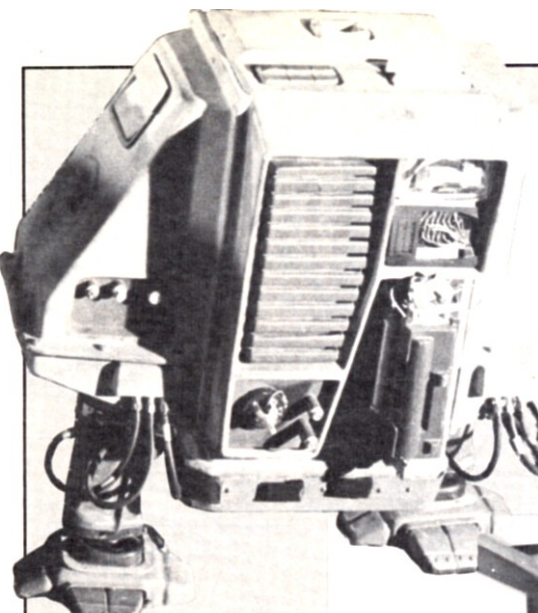
Shourt estimates that as many as 12 people worked on Phil on a regular basis, and several machine shops were subcontracted to build his parts. "He's built very much like an aircraft in that all his parts were designed, sent out for bid, bids awarded, the parts built, then sent back for testing and quality control."

Aesthetics didn't necessarily make it practical from an engineering standpoint, either. All the parts—the motors, gear boxes and drive-train hardware—had to be ordered, and some, like motors, which had a 12 to 18 month lead time, forced certain aesthetic decisions based on what could be found on the shelf.

Eight quality control reviews later, Phil was born. For back-up purposes two identical units were built at the same time. Daryl Dzioba and Neil Dreiseszum created and assembled Phil's electrical system, with support from Ralph Leitzgen. Brian Bevis did the mechanical design and related cardboard prototypes. Mechanical prototypes and assembly was the work of Larry Stevens, John Fifer and Rick Bugenthal. Peter von Sholly fashioned Phil's radar-dish ear design and painted his body. Nancy Galindo coordinated the production.

David Merritt designed Phil's transparent brain. "I went through the script and found I had to design the functions of the brain after Phil's various emotions—his thinking process, when he feels happy or sad or angry or confused. I patterned it after the human brain, by sectioning it into different parts." He conceived a "futuristic, yet realistic" brain with a transparent casing so that audiences could see inside it and realize that no actor was piloting Phil.

Merritt spent two weeks coming up with a mock-up of the brain, and another two months putting a finished version together, rummaging through electronic supply houses to find "boxes of stuff" he combined with items he made himself, like a standing acrylic circuit board with 3" tall rectangular blocks and glued-on resistors. Also included were parts from a Coke machine and vacuum tubes from an old radio. Von Sholly drafted a plan of the brain, and it was then sent out to be manufactured. An outside contractor constructed the plastic base of the aluminum-plexiglass brain case, where the multiple layers of electronics for Phil's lighting system were to be inset. Outside the case are two round, green glass eyes, illuminated from within by lights in 4" sockets that rotate. Merritt made it possible for some of the modules inside the brain case to be removed, so that when Phil "grows" during the course of the movie—indicated by a longer neck and slightly



The robot drones in Douglas Trumbull's *SILENT RUNNING* served as inspiration for *HEARTBEEPS* director Alan Arkush. "It was the card-playing scene between Bruce Dern and his little robots—Huey, Dewey and Louie—that gave me the clue that this picture could really work," he said.

Coincidentally, Jamie Shourt, the MPI technician who directed the design and construction of *HEARTBEEPS*' baby robot Phil, also worked on the creation of the Drones for Douglas Trumbull.

Unlike the sophisticated electronic robot Shourt made for Arkush, the Drones were powered by human operators, bilateral amputees recruited at a rehabilitation center in Long Beach. Trumbull had gotten the idea for the Drones, and for using the amputees, after watching Tod Browning's classic horror film, *FREAKS*.

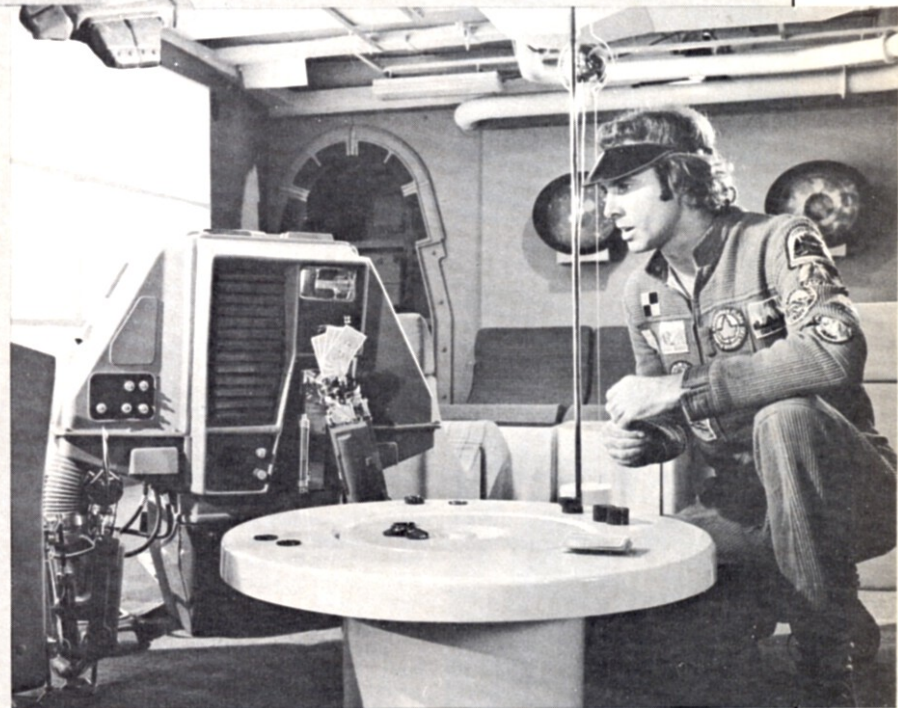
The concept was a breakthrough for science fiction films, presenting robots for the first time as non-humanoid in function and appearance.

The drone bodies were made of lightweight plastic, and weighed about 30 pounds. The amputees walked on their hands. The drone feet were attached to hand grips using dowel rods. The manipulator arms used by the drones in the card-playing scenes referred to by Arkush were a commercially available medical product. Shourt rented one, then duplicated it for use on the other drones.

Top Right: The card playing scene that inspired director Alan Arkush in his approach to *HEARTBEEPS*. Bottom Right: Bilateral amputee Cheryl Sparks as Huey, rehearsing with Bruce Dern.

SILENT RUNNING

Douglas Trumbull's 'drones' served as the inspiration for HEARTBEEPS' baby robot, but unlike Phil, they had very special people inside.



MEL ARNOLD

The man who built Gort and Tobor, the Great is HEARTBEEPS' link with the past.



Mel Arnold inside Crimebuster.

Mel Arnold, Universal's senior effects man on HEARTBEEPS, is an effects veteran who worked on two of the genre's most memorable robots, Gort from THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL (1951) and TOBOR, THE GREAT (1953).

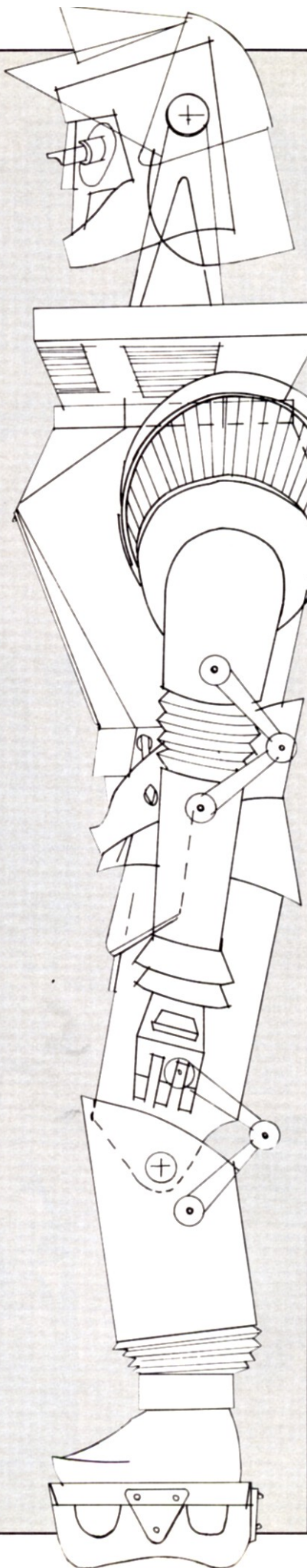
In more than 35 years in the business, Arnold has created giant props for numerous TV commercials, Ingrid Bergman's metal armor in JOAN OF ARC, and miniatures, wind, rain and explosions for such films as THE HINDENBURG, JAWS, EARTHQUAKE, AIRPORT '75 and—most recently—Universal's GHOST STORY. An autographed picture of James Garner (from Arnold's days on THE ROCKFORD FILES) is inscribed: "If you can't blow it up, it can't be done."

Always "good at technical things," Arnold studied working sheet metal in school and began his motion picture career at the Hal Roach Studios in 1946. His 13 years at 20th-Century Fox included a stint on a B-picture called THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL, which Arnold remembers mostly because he was in charge of dressing 8-foot tall actor Locke Martin, who played Gort. Arnold also made a metal stand-in (with padding) of Gort for scenes when the robot was stationary or had to remain still for lighting tests.

"Martin was so tall I had to stand on top of a ladder to fit him into his suits," laughed Arnold. "Martin would sweat in the suit until it was running down his arms. He caught pneumonia from the chilly air during the all night shooting."

Republic Studios borrowed Arnold to work on their independently-financed science-fiction programmer, TOBOR, THE GREAT in 1953. His expertise with metalwork went toward preparing Tobor's aluminum body and lucite head for the actor chosen to play the role. The original body designed by M-G-M artist Gabriel Scognamillo (an Oscar nominee for THE STORY OF THREE LOVES), was diamond-shaped, and stuck out so far that the full-size cardboard mock-up Arnold made for the actor didn't allow him to lower his arms. After streamlining the frame and sand-finishing the aluminum on the final product, Arnold accompanied his creation to Griffith Park for location shooting before commitments called him back to Fox. Queries Arnold: "I wonder why they never show that movie on the late show?"

Right: The original drafting plans for TOBOR, THE GREAT, an 8-foot tall robot constructed by Arnold from sheet metal for the 1953 Republic film. **Left:** The robot and its design by art director Gabriel Scognamillo.



taller body, elongated with risers—additional parts can be inserted to make him "smarter."

Inside the brain are four 14-watt quartz-halogen lights, powerful enough to melt the case if left on for more than two minutes at a time. Red lights would glow when Phil was angry (and smoke was pumped through a 3/4" plastic tube to fill the chamber, and flowed out of screened vents about his neck and head), blue lights when he was feeling mellow or pleased. Ideas were indicated by circuit boards with lights that flashed like a computer. A motor allowed the entire head to pogo up and down and from side to side, like the animals on car dashboards.

The final Phil unit stands three feet tall, with two sets of baby blue treads covered in a non-stick surface (one smooth for indoors, another with cleats for outdoors). His body is water-resistant (important with the heavy fog and dew of the Northern California location), and completely waterproof up to 10 inches from the bottom, since he has to cross a stream in a scene.

His left arm is anthropomorphic; the shoulder, elbow and wrist have joints like a human arm for twisting and rotating. His hand is mittened with a soft cotton glove (sewn by MPI accountant Julianne Berdrow) and can grasp both small and large objects. The right arm is equipped with a series of utensils—three different Phillips head screwdrivers, a drill bit, an adjustable wrench and a pair of tin snips for wirecutting—that flip out via radio control. Only one utensil at a time could be operated, and only the screwdriver implement was fully functional; the other implements were actually operated for close-ups by a technician manipulating dummy arms with a hand grip at the end of a cable.

"The challenge with Phil was breaking down what goes into making emotions apparent on the human face and then translating it into mechanical functions," said Arkush. Although post-dubbed sound effects will contribute to Phil's overall effectiveness, his personality is largely due to the combined skills of the four men who ran his radio controls: Mike Lantieri, Kevin Pike, Greg Jensen and Dayton Osmond—all Universal personnel.

Lantieri, in charge of the studio's electronics department, was sent to MPI as studio liaison to familiarize himself with Phil's inner workings as he was being built. The others joined him at MPI for two days to begin experimenting with the controls, as Phil's 24 channels would require split-second orchestration between operators. Each man was responsible for six channels. Lantieri ran Phil's left side and arm, while Osmond ran Phil's head, right side and arm, including his pocket-knife appendage. Jensen operated the tracks that drove the robot, and Pike helmed the controls for Phil's eyes and ears. Lantieri maintained Phil during the Santa Cruz shooting, acting as an extension of Neil Dreiseszun's hands. Neither Dreiseszun nor Larry Stevens, who presided over Phil on location, was legally allowed to touch the

machine, as MPI was not a union facility.

"Operating Phil's functions was easy," commented Lantieri. "We got very adept at it after only a few days. It was coordinating the operation between ourselves that was the tough part." The controls were standard six-channel units with uni-directional levers or joysticks. All 24 frequencies were in the amateur band, which meant that there was constant interference from other operators sharing the frequencies. "At one point," Lantieri recalled, "when everything was working, we had something like 60 amateur channels in use, which is just about everything they have to offer in amateur radio. We kept getting interference from the University radio station in Santa Cruz, and there were some people flying radio-controlled airplanes in the vicinity, which blew out circuits and kept the crew really busy, especially me."

Phil quickly became a popular personality, performing for the crew by shaking hands, tossing balls or tilting forward in mock curtsy to Andy Kaufman when he wished the robot a good morning. By abusing some of the servos in his head, the operators could make him giggle—a violation of the owner's manual, but very comical. (His actual 'voice' will be synthesized on the guitar by The Grateful Dead's Jerry Garcia.) Arkush talked to him like one of the actors, calling out to him to "look camera left" or "hit your mark."

Considering his complex electro-mechanical nature, "there were no major problems with Phil at all," according to Neil Dreiseszun. "Occasionally we'd blow a fuse or a belt would slip, but for the most part, he was the least trouble of all the robots."

Phil now makes his home at Universal, where he is on display as part of the studio tour. It is planned for him to be rebuilt and put under a computer tape system so that he can operate on his own. Recalled Max Anderson, "I distinctly remember the last time I saw Phil, the day he left MPI. He ran himself out the back door and up the loading dock of the truck. As the door closed, he turned around and waved goodbye."

CRIMEBUSTER

"...the stopping power of a Sherman tank and the personality of a German Shepherd..."

—John Hill's script

Crimebuster-00779 is the police unit designed to protect and serve California residents in the year 1995. In HEARTBEEPS, he's in the Repair and Reassignment Division of General Motors Robots Inc. because of an overreacting malfunction—a technical way of saying that he's trigger-happy. When Val, Aqua and Catskill flee the factory he is accidentally activated and unknowingly sent out to round up the escaped robots.

Both Crimebuster and Catskill were designed in the Universal art department by artist Bill Major and production designer John Corso, with input from Michael Phillips and Alan Arkush. The studio's Special Effects division, headed by Chuck Arrigo, did all the mechanics work, engineering and construction, under the supervision of Whitey Krumm. Mike Lantieri and his crew were responsible for the electronics. The two departments also created additional robots for the film's factory sequence, like the automated Sweeper (largely the work of Karl Miller) and Secretarybot—a motorized desk, complete with teletype—and a Coke machine with frontal fiber-optics that dispenses beverage in plastic pouches. Other robots were represented by spare parts, prop pieces and actors in costume.

Basic construction of the vehicle took about six weeks, using a commercially-available all-terrain vehicle for the chassis. But Crimebuster was "a continual building job," according to Whitey Krumm, because of all the extras that director Arkush kept requesting. Krumm wasn't happy with Crimebuster's all-terrain base, and would have preferred building his own using a steel tubing chassis and powering it with two Volkswagen engines. But because of time

and budget considerations, he had to be content with changing the motors and transmission and upgrading the vehicle's performance specification.

Bill Lee, overseer in the studio prop shop but working under Krumm, was responsible for most of Crimebuster's mechanics. Mel Arnold built Crimebuster's stunning array of interchangeable accessories: two gas-operated machine guns, which produced a visible flame for daylight filming; a gas-operated cannon, hooked up like a welding torch with a spark plug in the end so that it exploded with a flame; a flame-thrower with a range of 30 to 40 feet; a periscope that moved up and down automatically; a grenade launcher; a flaregun; a camera; and a three-prong pincer to scoop up "evidence."

The unit also sports two slightly readapted AR-18 machine guns with cartridges that fire blanks (all sound effects were added in postproduction); a bullhorn; a spotlight; a searchlight that tilts up and down; and a (dummy) siren.

Richard Galbraith and John Striber are credited with driving Crimebuster, with either Mel Arnold or Bill Lee sitting in tandem directly behind them and firing the gadgetry from the inside control panel, or sliding out various accessories on tracks (the kind used for sliding patio doors). The men climbed into the machine through two hinged panels with louvers. Looking through the mesh-covered louvers was the only way they could see out, although an on-board radio kept them in constant communication with the director and a radio control operator, who kept watch over 12 different channels.

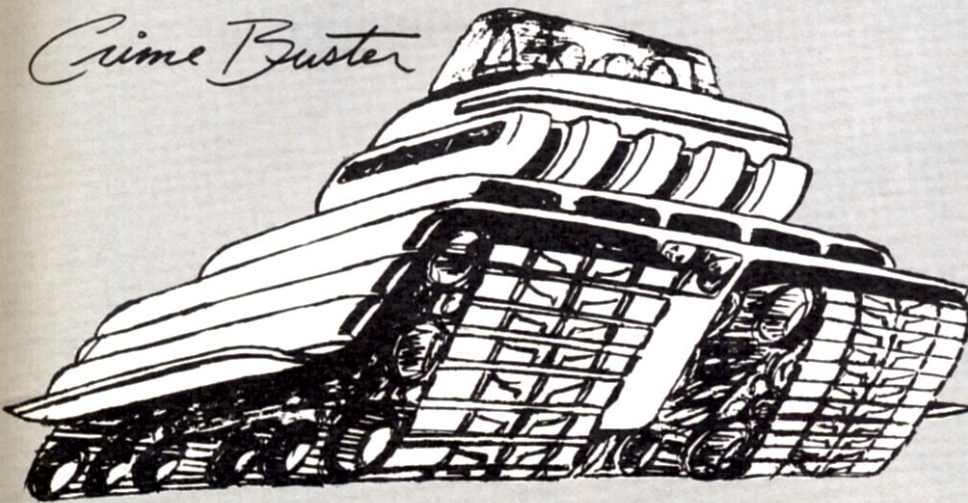
The most dangerous of Crimebuster's hardware was his modified Army flame-thrower. When in use, both men inside wore fire-retarded suits like those used by professional race car drivers. They were additionally protected by safety equipment and portable dry chemical extinguishers. A panic button was rigged to trip the release of a non-toxic chemical fire retardant from pressurized bottles encircling the craft's interior and fans were installed to make the working conditions as comfortable as possible.



HEARTBEEPS features a number of incidental robots, including this "Sweeper Robot," a worker at the robot repair factory. The robot was designed and built under the supervision of Universal's Karl Miller.

CRIMEBUSTER (below) is a trigger-happy police robot. As originally designed by MPI's Max Anderson (below left), Crimebuster resembled a small armored tank. However, the final look (below) was created by Bill Major of the Universal art department and production designer John Corso, and built under the supervision of Whitey Krumm. Crimebuster stood 8½ feet tall and weighed more than 3,000 pounds, and was constructed on the chassis of an ATV Torque-o-Matic, an all-terrain vehicle featuring rubber wheels and tractor treads built by Attex, Inc. to maneuver through snow and grassy marshes. More than 100 pounds of rechargeable batteries were needed to operate the gadget-laden robot—among other devices, it sported a revolving turret, machine guns, cannon, flame-throwers, a Polaroid camera and spotlights. It required at least three persons to operate, including a driver and two effects controllers, one inside the vehicle and one to work the radio-activated controls. For scenes that required Crimebuster to travel quickly, a second unit was built with a gutted interior, weighing about 1,000 pounds less.

Crime Buster



VAL, AQUA & CATSKILL

"When early makeup concepts generated at Universal failed to produce the desired results, producer Michael Phillips turned to Stan Winston."

Originally, all the robots in HEARTBEEPS were going to be articulated automatons. But when Andy Kaufman expressed interest in the project, it was decided to make the leads, Val and Aqua, actors in makeup. Producer Michael Phillips turned to Stan Winston, who did character makeups for the studio's film version of THE WIZ.

By this time, Phillips was on the verge of abandoning any type of elaborate makeups for the principal characters, as he was concerned about the potential cost of maintaining it on a day to day basis. He felt instead that a "straight" mannequin-type makeup could be supported throughout the production's shooting schedule.

"Once somebody says it can't be done, it becomes a challenge," said Winston, "and that's the time I usually dive in." Sold on John Hill's "warm and sensitive" screenplay, Winston agreed to apply his hands to the character makeups for Val and Aqua, at the same time offering to redesign Catskill's, which he found lacking in character. "Arkush and Phillips felt it was important to eliminate the facial tones common to human skin, like pores and wrinkles," said Winston.

ROBOT MAKEUPS designed by Stan Winston included Val (below) played by Andy Kaufman, and three domestics (right) used in a party scene, pictured in clay prototypes. Far Right: Jim Kagel finishes the clay prototype of Catskill. Winston reworked the Universal art department design for the comic robot.

Mike McCracken sculpted Andy Kaufman's Val, while Jim Kagel handled the development of Catskill. Winston supervised all the designs and sculpted Bernadette Peters' Aqua. The three also created an assortment of butler and maid robots for a party sequence.

Before Aqua's design phase got underway, Winston sculpted a bust of Peters' face, which helped acquaint him with her features, to be used to fashion a character mask. A similar procedure was done on Kaufman by Kagel, who studied tapes of the comedian's facial movements to extract points for his robot caricature.

Extensive color photographs of both were taken in a myriad of angles, and life casts made so that appliances could be sculpted over the casts, with alterations by the artist. "Our objective," said Winston, "was to create a caricature of the principals without losing their identity—robots that looked as though they were designed to resemble Andy and Bernadette."

Before the idea of makeups was firmly set, Winston leaned towards using what was basically a mask with mouth and eye movement in the hopes of saving production time and money. "But we were unsuccessful," he lamented. "We couldn't come up with a workable mask that had the character of the actor." He then tried various polyurethanes to get a translucent appearance, but it lacked elasticity and proved caustic to skin. Nor would strictly painting foam rubber pieces work, from experience he knew that rubber wrinkles.

Finally, makeup artist Ken Diaz suggested gelatin, an idea Winston had already discarded, thinking that all the outdoor shooting would prove ruinous to gelatin appliances, which absorb perspiration and melt easily. Realizing it was the only way to go at that point, Winston and his crew attempted to develop a heat resistant gelatin formula. After much effort they produced one which didn't melt quite as quickly.

Every day on the set was a breathless one, as makeup men Zoltan Elek and Vince Prentice worked to get the actors through the day without major appliance meltdown problems. "I had Ken Diaz and Lance Anderson

alternating with two other people in the lab to produce gelatin pieces for every day of shooting," said Winston, who designed the pieces to extend down the actors' neck and over their ears. "We had to have a backlog of at least two sets ready as replacements, because midway through the day, the mouthpieces, which are the thinnest, would start to melt off. We tried backing them with plastic spray to keep them from absorbing water, but it didn't work."

Val and Aqua's final look is what you might get if you crossed a 1995 issue of *Popular Mechanics* with *Vogue*. Aqua is an assemblage of seven appliance pieces, with a soft, golden cast to them, bronze highlights on her cheeks, heavy metal flakes on her eyelids, bright red painted lips covering acrylic dentures, and a coiffure of plastic (based on one of Peters' own styles) created by Hollywood hairman Ziggy Geike. Her costume is by Theodora Van Runkle.

Val's design involved thirteen gelatin pieces, including ones for his eyelids and brows. Only metal colors with pearl essence added to them were used to color the Val, Aqua, and Catskill makeups, all in the tonal ranges of silver to gold to bronze. Bronze provides Val's dominant color, with some silver gold for highlights. His hands are covered with gloves made to look like metal, and his Howdy Doody hairpiece is easily removable. Madeline Graneto, known for her children's clothing designs, created both Val's striped suit and the remaining costumes for the film's characters.

Catskill is a cruder robot by virtue of the script. His character is very broad, with a permanently curved mouth he talks out of on one side. Colored aged silver with bronze and gold hints, his thinning hair is actually applied steel wool, which gives him a 'Phil Silvers' look.

"I'm very proud of the look we achieved on HEARTBEEPS," Winston said. "It's probably the only time in the history of motion pictures that the principal characters are in elaborate prosthetic makeups, covering every exposed inch of skin in almost every shot in the entire film."

Catskill-55602 is the "crazy uncle" of the roving family of futuristic robots, a Brooklyn-accented (voice by Jack Carter), Borscht-belt comedian with a passion for good cigars and bad Henny Youngman jokes. Catskill's sole function is to tour the nightclub circuit and entertain audiences with his decidedly Jewish brand of "take my servos—please" humor. About 5' 6" tall, he sits atop a brown steamer trunk (which contains controls to activate his batteries or to short circuit the unit in case of frequency jam). A speaker built into his chest broadcasts both his jokes and a drumroll to underscore their delivery. His lounge lizard suit is made of a sheeny velvet material, adorned with cut-glass cufflinks and an artificial red carnation. A matching tie contains his "pleasure center" on which there are spinning lights that change from yellow to orange when he gets a laugh. In the gauche diamond pinky ring that completes the ensemble, electronic effects man Mike Lantieri drilled a hole and added a small light to make it sparkle.

Catskill's body is in two pieces—front and back—made of fiberglass, which close via a velcro seam. Stan Winston's design for the head made it possible to lock and unlock it on a metal collar neckpiece, like a diving helmet. "You could barely slip a piece of paper between Barry Diamond and the sides of the fiberglass," said Lantieri, "that's how tightly he was wedged in there." The actor entered the unit from behind and would crouch on a small stool by folding his knees with his feet behind him—a painful position he could maintain for only 40 minutes at a time. The headpiece, crammed as it was with wires and batteries, was suffocatingly hot, and added to the discomfort. His face was either blackened with makeup or covered with a piece of dark cheesecloth so as not to show. His arms fit through the openings in the torso, and his hands were dusted with talcum powder before the gloves and additional costuming were donned. Diamond was also fitted with a wireless mike so that he could actually repeat aloud the jokes in the script using his training as a comedian to time the motions of the



AQUA (right) is played by Bernadette Peters in an exquisite gelatin appliance makeup designed by Stan Winston. Bottom Right: Spirit gum in hand, Peters undergoes tests of makeup applied by Zoltan Elek (left) and Winston.

robot to the jokes.

Senior effects man Mel Arnold's most significant contribution to Catskill was the machine he devised to keep the robot's ever-present cigar continuously belching smoke. (The studio is currently pursuing a patent on the unit.) His machine was smaller and burned a cleaner oil than pre-existing models, but put out almost as much smoke. The electric coil on the base heats a concentrated light mineral oil (known in the trade as "Voodoo juice") to a flash point, and pumps the resulting smoke from the pressurized canister up through a tube in Catskill's body that extends through his hand to the cigar. Bruce Fox made the cigar out of rubber wrapped around a piece of copper tubing. Gray papier-mache', pushed out by a motor driven by a 1½-volt battery, created the cigar's ash. As Diamond moved the cigar away from his mouth (some models were slotted to fit into Catskill's mouth to leave the actor's hand free), Fox would hit the radio control that expelled the smoke. A series of tiny lights called Grain O'Wheat lights made the butt of the cigar appear to glow. The only problem with the smoke machine was its occasional tendency to backfire and douse Diamond with hot oil.

While it is evident that Val, Aqua, Catskill, Crimbuster and Phil represent a most impressive combination of technology and man-hours, how affectionately audiences will embrace the automated troupe still remains to be seen. Robbie Blalack is confident of the film's potential success. "With industrial pollution caused by machines and factories and our government's desire to build MX systems and B-1 bombers, machines are threatening to destroy us. HEART-BEEPS ties into the fantasy that maybe we could make peace with our machines, and perhaps even become friends with them." And what better time to deliver such a message than Christmas? □



REVIEWS

This fairy tale isn't Monty Python—it's better

TIME BANDITS

An Avco-Embassy release, 10-81, 116 mins. In Dolby Stereo. In Color. Written by Michael Palin and Terry Gilliam. Produced and Directed by Terry Gilliam. Cinematographer, Peter Biziou. Executive Producers, George Harrison and Denis O'Brien. Editor, Julian Doyle. Production Designer, Milly Burns. Special Effects Supervisor, John Bunker. Art Director, Norman Garwood. Costume Designer, Jim Acheson in association with Hazel Cote.

Robin Hood	John Cleese
King Agamemnon	Sean Connery
Mrs. Ogre	Katherine Helmond
Napoleon	Ian Holm
Vincent	Michael Palin
Supreme Being	Ralph Richardson
Ogre	Peter Vaughan
Evil Genius	David Warner
Randall	David Rappaport
Fidget	Kenny Baker
Wally	Jack Purvis
Og	Mike Edmonds
Strutter	Malcolm Dixon
Vermin	Tiny Ross
Kevin	Craig Warnock

TIME BANDITS has been described as a "kid's film with fangs" and that's a fair appraisal, but only one facet of a gem. What former Monty Python members Terry Gilliam and Michael Palin have wrought is not a Python Film. It is distinctive, original, imaginative, audacious and, quite simply, the finest fantasy-comedy in a long, long time. And though the film could be accused of lifting inspiration from several classic sources (starting with THE WIZARD OF OZ), it remains a unique creation. The film is director Gilliam's stab at a more traditional form of storytelling, yet retaining the organized chaos of the Python films.

The audience immediately sympathizes with young Kevin (played by newcomer Craig Warnock) trapped in a dull suburban existence with par-

Randall, leader of the time bandits, (David Rappaport, center) introduces the self-righteous and supercilious Robin Hood (John Cleese, right) to his gang.



ents more interested in television and the latest kitchen gadgetry than they are in him. So, when the wardrobe cabinet in his bedroom begins shaking mysteriously one evening, the magical promise of adventures to come arrives not a moment too soon.

Why the oddly attired gang of dwarves arrives in Kevin's bedroom, or why, armed with the only "Time-Hole Map of the Universe" in existence, they would be interested in looting their way through history for mere gold and jewels, never makes sense. But who cares? Five seconds later, the group—plus Kevin—is pursued by the rather annoyed owner of the map, the Supreme Being (the dwarves were underlings of the S.B. working in the Trees and Small Shrubs Department) and off on a grand adventure strewn with the type of lunacy only the British can get away with.

Even though dwarves and children are tough acts to follow, director Gilliam was concerned whether Kevin and his partners could carry the narrative by themselves. He hedged his bets by stocking up with star cameos, including a hilarious sendup of Robin Hood with John Cleese as a righteous do-gooder surrounded by thieves and cutthroats.

Gilliam's visual plan for the film centers around shooting his small protagonists from low angles to make their scale and perspective appear the correct one. Only at the climactic battle between good and evil (incarnated by the venerable Sir Ralph Richardson, and a wonderfully villainous David Warner, whose headgear looks suspiciously like the ALIEN face-hugger) does he return to the "normal" frame of reference. This sequence easily ranks with the classic duel of sorcerers in Corman's THE RAVEN, though it is more lavish and inventive.

Besides the expected craziness, TIME BANDITS succeeds in more than provoking laughter from the audience. While it's not rare in literature (read Ray Bradbury's *Something Wicked This Way Comes*), seldom does film attempt to honestly capture a story from a child's point of view—with a true, attendant sense of wonder and no condescension. Kevin, in fact, is portrayed as an adept problem solver, with more common sense and more "cool" under fire, than his cohorts. For this attitude alone, the film is commendable.

There is so much to admire about TIME BANDITS that it's hard to do it justice. It seems all but impossible the great special effects and impressive production values were achieved on a budget of only \$5 million. Others have spent six times as much with

far less to show for it. Technically, Gilliam is in firm command of the medium at all times, getting good work from his actors, maximizing texture and detail (a repeat viewing is bound to point up things you've missed the first time), handling action scenes with aplomb, convincingly showing those things he must show and ably suggesting the completeness the budget would not allow. His convincing feel for sumptuous and vivid period settings is particularly noteworthy.

The deficits of the film—the pacing flags a bit in places—are too slight to bother with. TIME BANDITS falls short only to the extent that its premise has such vast potential its reach necessarily exceeds the filmmakers' grasp.

Astonishingly, prior to the intervention of Avco-Embassy, most U.S. distributors pronounced the film unfunny, and all passed on it. TIME BANDITS humor is not of the Mel Brooks/grab-you-by-the-lapels school. Yet the film is consistently clever and amusing, spiked by stronger laughs that turn up when needed, and embellished with slivers of nightmare and dashes of more serious concerns, plus the weirder, nastier Pythonesque touches. Especially nice was the method used to dispose of concentrated ultimate evil—entrust it to the tender mercies of the Postal Service—and the neatest line yet for resurrecting a fallen hero. ("No excuse for laying off work.") The darkly equivocal ending will stir up much welcome controversy.

If the Hollywood majors don't know what to make of a groundbreaking fantasy like TIME BANDITS, their loss should be Avco's sizable gain.

Jordan R. Fox

Director Terry Gilliam (center) directs the fight between King Agamemnon (Sean Connery, right) and the Minotaur.



Python effects are cheap, but effective, says Terry Gilliam.

"It's not a matter of age," said Monty Python director Terry Gilliam about the appeal of TIME BANDITS, "but how much imagination you've retained and how well you've succeeded in keeping a child's unstructured way of thinking from being stamped out of your brain."

Imagination might be all you need to like TIME BANDITS, but it isn't enough to make it. With a minuscule budget of only \$5 million, it's amazing Gilliam was able to come up with such eye-opening special effects. Part of his cost-control comes from co-owning his own tiny effects facility in England. He worked on the design for most of the effects, making great use of reverse shooting and other basic techniques from earlier film eras.

"Mostly, it's going back to the simple stuff," he said. "The giant sequence was done with just camera angles and high-speed photography. The giant was only 5 feet 8 inches tall. Taller guys look too stretched out, but a short guy looks amazing when shooting up with a wide angle lens."

Gilliam is against the type of costly effects that send budgets skyrocketing to the moon. "We could do it," said Gilliam, "it's just that people like Lucas put a hell of a lot of money into it, so they attract the most attention."

"For instance, the battle on the ice with the fighter planes in THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK: the fact they chose to shoot light color fighters against light backgrounds means you have matte lines. They were trying to show off—that their technology is so good, they could get away with it. With all the expense of the process, I could still spot the lines and I hated it."

"I tend to work better under pressure," said Gilliam. "Too much time and money creates such an onus to excel, it screws me up. Without them you take risks because there's no choice."

Looker looks nice, but its great ideas fall flat

LOOKER

A Warner Bros. Release. 10-81. 94 mins. In Dolby Stereo. Filmed in Panavision. In Color. Written and Directed by Michael Crichton. Produced by Howard Jeffrey. Cinematographer, Paul Lomann. Production Designer, Dean Edward Mitzner. Editor, Carl Kress. Music by Barry DeVorzon. Special Effects, Joe Dav. Special Props Supervised by Bruce Behan. Associate Producer, John Lugar. Art Director, Jack G. Taylor, Jr. Costume Designer, Betsy Cox. Set Director, Jerry Wunderlich. Illustrator, George Jensen. Set Designers, Daniel Gluck, Bill Skinner, Robert Welch, Cameron Birnie, David Maltese.

Dr. Larry Roberts	Albert Finney
John Reston	James Coburn
Cindy	Susan Dey
Jennifer Long	Leigh Taylor-Young
L. Masters	Dorian Harewood
Moustache Man	Tim Rossovich
Dr. Jim Bellfield	Darryl Hickman
Tina	Kashryn Witt
Lisa	Terri Welles
Gandy	Ashley Cox
Ellen	Donna Benz
Jan	Catherine Parks

LOOKER looks terrific. It is a superbly designed (by Dean Edward Mitzner) bit of high-tech tomfoolery that ultimately resembles its own gimmicky idea: pretty but empty.

LOOKER's gimmick is tomography, the creation of computer-generated, three-dimensional human figure images for use in television. The images are capable of hypnotizing the viewing audience (something television couldn't do already?) and

so must be destroyed. The film, however, curiously skirts the implications of all this technological magic, content to present it as a prop form of evil that must be eradicated.

It is usual for Michael Crichton, who wrote and directed LOOKER, to come up with a crackerjack idea. Unfortunately, due to a lack of an interesting (or even functional) screenplay, he abysmally failed to make a competent film around it. For all of its innovative graphics (including some bizarre computer animation and lighting tricks) the film follows its tired formula and manages to botch that. It appears that some last-minute cutting has rendered much of the film's narrative haphazard, unravelling an already deficient story.

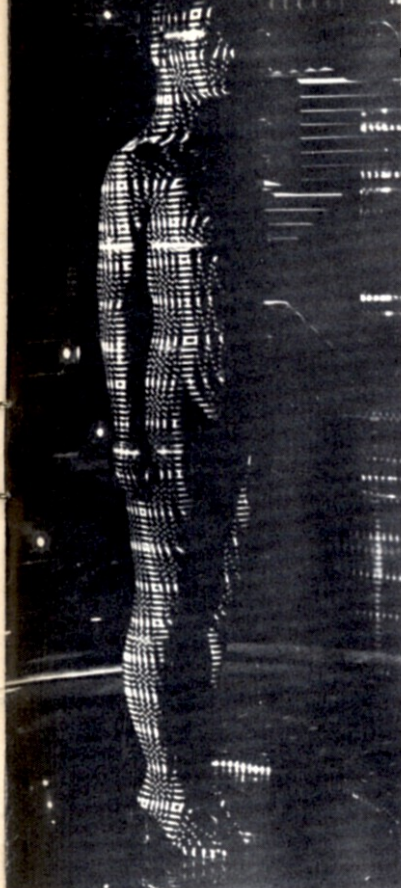
Albert Finney plays a top-notch plastic surgeon who has "done" four already beautiful young women, all models, changing their faces and bodies to conform to an identical set of precisely measured proportions so they can be "duplicated" for the television computer tomography. When three of the four turn up as questionable suicide victims, Finney takes the fourth (Susan Dey) under his wing. Promptly, he discovers powerful businessman James Coburn's nefarious

computer experiments. Coburn soon sets henchmen on their trail, and the last third of the film has the baddies, including Coburn, stalking Finney through a maze of TV sets during the black-tie presentation of Coburn's achievements.

For a film based on a supposedly valid scientific premise, all logic is reduced to coincidence, and the viewer is left in a confused tangle of actions. The movie leaves outrageously loose ends fluttering free. Two major suspense sequences, one a conventional TV movie car chase, follow each other without a pause for explanation. Capping all the confusion is one of the most absurd happy endings in recent memory. Finney, having destroyed Coburn's demonstration and his goon squad, walks off with Dey holding hands.

Finney plays his character in the classic Hitchcockian vein of an innocent drawn into an outlandish adventure, but not once is his composure or self-confidence shaken. But if Finney's disbelief or incredulity at what he's experiencing is never exhibited, ours certainly is. And the result is a personable, but remote central character that defeats our identification.

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A three dimensional body scan computer encodes the image of looker Susan Dey.

Rocky Horror fans won't have to wait in line to see this turkey

SHOCK TREATMENT

20th Century-Fox release. 9-81. 94 mins. In color. Directed by Jim Sharman. Music, Richard Hartley and Richard O'Brien. Book and lyrics by Richard O'Brien. Screenplay, Richard O'Brien and Jim Sharman. Produced by John Goldstone. Executive Producers, Lou Adler and Michael White. Designed by Brian Thompson. Cinematographer, Mike Molloy. Editor, Richard Bedford. Art Director, Andrew Sanders.

Janet Majors	Jessica Harper
Brad Majors	Farley Flavors
Cosmo McKinley	Richard O'Brien
Nation McKinley	Patricia Quinn
Judge Oliver Wright	Charles Gray
Betty Hapschatt	Ruby Wax
Nurse Anasloug	Nell Campbell

To be perfectly honest about it, I am in *no* way, shape or form a member of the cult which adores THE ROCKY HORROR PICTURE SHOW. From Bangkok to Beirut—wherever and whenever that curious celluloid revue screens—you can find local members of the cult, decked out in appropriately weird attire, holding candles in the theatre (unless prevented from doing so by the fire marshall), and reciting dialogue and lyrics right along with Brad, Janet, Riff Raff, Dr. Frank, and the gang. This may or may not be more entertaining than what is flicking on the screen, but it does testify to a bona fide popularity that built up subsequent to the film's ignominious boxoffice demise in first-run.

For all that, we must truly wax nostalgic over the original film in the presence of its dubious successor ("Not a sequel, not a prequel, but an equal," insists the production notes, indulging in some very wishful

thinking). Whereas Fox erred greatly in virtually shelving THE ROCKY HORROR PICTURE SHOW before that film had its chance, the studio could spare itself much fiscal grief by not releasing this sorry effort at all. Even the most ardent fans of RHPS will be stupefied into a near-lobotomized state by SHOCK TREATMENT.

Believe me, friends, this is no fun at all! I would much rather be able to tell you that Richard O'Brien, Jim Sharman, and Lou Adler have done it again (whatever it is). But I can't. To begin with, while there is a character named Brad and Janet—presumably the same Brad and Janet a few years later, had the events of ROCKY HORROR never occurred—that is the sole connection to the earlier film. And SHOCK TREATMENT is not at all a genre film, much less the multi-layered sendup its predecessor was. That's no crime. But what is a crime is the way the film poses as true kin to the earlier one, and the excruciating way it makes 90 minutes seem like 90 years.

Richard O'Brien's book and lyrics want to be deucedly clever, but come off as a very private joke the meaning of which must be known only to him. It seems that Brad Majors (Cliff De Young, taking over from Barry Bostwick) is terminally dull, so wife Janet (Jessica Harper, ditto for Susan Sarandon), the other half of the quintessentially clean-cut young American couple, takes some obnoxiously insistent advice, and has him commit-

ted. The advice has filtered down through the TV that influences all that goes on in Dentonville, the very image of Anytown, USA. Behind it all is a fast-food corporation and its sinister director, Farley Flavors (also played by De Young). Flavors, you see, wants Janet all to himself, and his newest brainstrom, a mental health franchise, threatens us all.

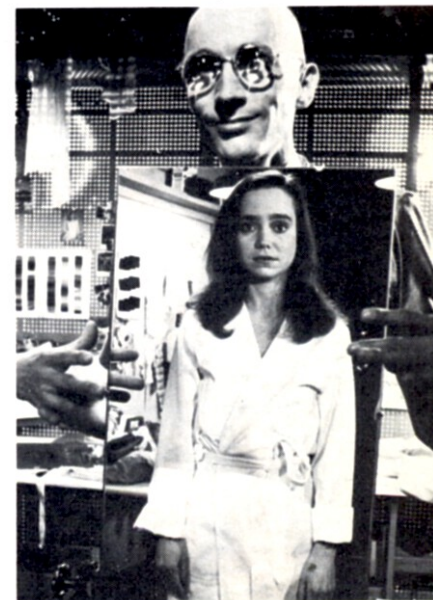
There exists the seeds of a decent idea here, but the broad social-comment subtext—the bland homogenization of a standardized, technologized, sterilized, and anesthetized middle-class America—has been done much better before (in A BOY AND HIS DOG and Spielberg's CE3K, to name just two). Between the tuneless music and forgettable lyrics, the completely uninvolved, uninteresting characters, and the no-win/no-lose/no-sense situations, the film has nothing to offer. If placed on trial, the Production Designer could probably plead he was just following orders, but the horrifyingly dull and blankly repetitive sets—meant to suggest that the town is the TV studio is the sanitarium—leave us feeling as caged-in as poor Brad in his padded cell. Sharman's dead, disconnected style of direction for SHOCK TREATMENT is intended to evoke the ennui and vacuity that haunts most of television. But that is tantamount to making a gun control statement by shooting an N.R.A. member.

Nowhere in SHOCK TREATMENT is there anything like the verve

or quirky originality of THE ROCKY HORROR PICTURE SHOW. This film will have you longing to doze off, but the constant low-level irritation makes that impossible. Under the circumstances, some *real* electroconvulsive therapy ("shock treatment") would seem like a welcome relief.

Allen Smithee

Dr. Cosmo McKinley, played by writer, lyricist Richard O'Brien, prescribes a new wardrobe for Janet (Jessica Harper).



LOOKER

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Most of the character's motivation is never explained. Why must the human models be killed after they have been duplicated and why early on (and quickly forgotten) does Coburn try to frame Finney by strewing evidence—Finney's pen, coat, buttons—around scenes of what are supposedly suicides? Nor is the hypnotizing effect of Coburn's 3-D TV adequately explained.

Being trundled around in Irwin Yablans' briefcase from Fox to Paramount before it came to rest at the Ladd Company (without Yablans) may be one reason for LOOKER's problems. Before Crichton got his hands on it, the film was described as a comedy-thriller. Perhaps it should have stayed that way. The elements of humor are ludicrous and intrude all the way through, even though Crichton's resolutely deadpan direction achieves a fine sense of black farce during the long conclusion.

Unintentional humor is also a hallmark of a bad film and LOOKER

is no exception. For instance, Finney and Dey investigate the super-secret chambers of the "Looker Lab" by riding in on the back of a big black rolling box, a sort of negroid R2D2, that empties the wastebaskets! The car chase, in which Finney and Tim Rossovich, Coburn's head security honcho, trade shots with their gee-whiz, Buck-Rogers-ish light ray guns, becomes funny because of its high seriousness. Inexplicably the sequence has a pathetically clichéd "comic" finale—Finney's car winds up in the middle of a fountain. In trying to push his material towards the serious thriller route, on which COMA was an excellent vehicle, Crichton, instead, winds up with a comedy of errors.

There are some nice details and bravura sequences. The light ray gun is well introduced. It emits a powerful burst of light temporarily paralyzing the target victim without his knowing it, allowing the gunman to push people off balconies or engage in one-sided fist fights. It is nicely used, in a masterfully edited scene, in which

Rossovich searches Finney's apartment while Finney is still inside. The gun, however, too quickly becomes just another gimmicky plot gimmick.

The ultimate function of Coburn's dallings is never revealed, although one of the finished TV ads is political, involving a "senator" on a Reaganite right-wing binge. Nevertheless, the system's purpose seems to be no more insidious than to sell more toilet tissue. Television, in general, is an old and over-used target. Does anyone emerging from adolescence with half a brain really regard TV, that great trivializer of American life and culture, with anything but suspicion and skepticism?

Crichton has proven, with his technologically-orientated fantasies, that he has an instinctive grasp of the visceral qualities and requirements of genre films and a feeling for the sturdy but limited characters who inhabit them. But he's failed with LOOKER. Next time he should hire a good screenwriter to flesh out a fascinating idea into a fascinating movie. **David Bartholomew**



Albert Finney, armed with Crichton's invisibility gun, a great but wasted idea.

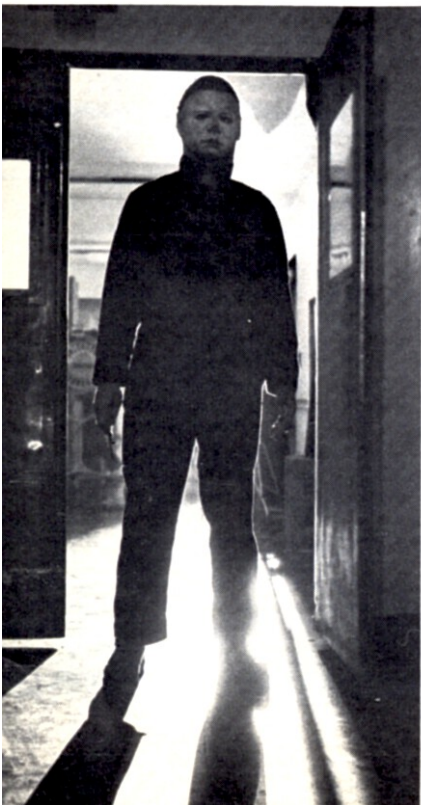
The Second Coming of the Shape is just a dull, dumb rehash

HALLOWEEN II

A Universal Pictures release, 10 81, 92 mins. In Color. In Dolby Stereo. Filmed in Panavision. Directed by Rick Rosenthal. Written by John Carpenter, Debra Hill. Produced by Debra Hill, John Carpenter. Cinematographer, Dean Cundey. Production Designer, Michael Riva. Executive Producers, Irwin Yablans, Joseph Wolf. Music by John Carpenter in association with Alan Howarth. Edited by Mark Goldblatt. Special effects supervisor Larry Cavanaugh. Special Effects, Frank Munoz.

Laurie Strode Jamie Lee Curtis
Sam Loomis Donald Pleasence
Leigh Brackett Charles Cyphers
Graham Jeffery Kramer
Jimmy Lance Guest
Karen Pamela Susan Shoop
The Shape Dick Warlock

Dick Warlock as The Shape.



Since a rain of bullets and a nasty fall from a second-story window didn't seem to stop "the bogey man" in John Carpenter's HALLOWEEN, it only follows that the subsequent bullets, padlocks, plate glass doors and flames of HALLOWEEN II should prove equally puny deterrents. "The Shape"—the embodiment of anonymous evil which both films take pains to represent him it as—just keeps coming back for more. But producers-screenwriters John Carpenter and Debra Hill have hit upon one sure-fire weapon that even the unstoppable Shape cannot survive: a flaccid, implausibility-ridden screenplay.

HALLOWEEN II was co-engineered to overlap the climactic action of its predecessor by several minutes. In the opening sequence, old footage by Carpenter meshes seamlessly with that of Rick Rosenthal, who picks up the directorial relay race about five minutes into the action.

Initially, it's fun to hear again Carpenter's prickly three-note theme music and to rediscover plucky Laurie Strode (Jamie Lee Curtis) still whining and quivering on the bedroom floor in her blood-soaked nightgown. The spirit similarly rallies when trenchcoated Dr. Sam Loomis (Donald Pleasence) skulks on screen in pursuit of the homicidal masked phantom while muttering half-baked anthropological psycho-babble to anyone within earshot.

Panaglide point-of-view shots take us on a tour of the backyards and alleyways of Haddonfield, where jack-o'-lanterns leer out of the picture windows and T.V.'s are tuned-in to NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD. In a wry, brief bit a matron in pin-curls leaves off slicing a sandwich. Then a hand (guess who) reaches for a

carving knife, splattering the bread with dollops of blood.

So far so good.

It is when the heroine is shipped off to the local hospital, with the Shape in hot pursuit, that HALLOWEEN II takes on all the snap of week-old candy. By shifting the action to a broader canvas, Carpenter and Hill only blunder the intensive space and time formula that they exploited so relentlessly in their first opus.

Once the crazed Michael Meyers (alias the Shape) hits the bedpan circuit, the film collapses into a series of systematic "snuffings" of various security guards, nurses, doctors and ambulance drivers by gory modes of dispatch (hammers to the cranium, hypodermics in the eyeball, hot whirlpool bath scaldings) which take HALLOWEEN II into FRIDAY THE 13TH-land. In the production notes, producer Hill pronounces, "Chopping off people's limbs isn't scary or entertaining, it's disgusting." Presumably HALLOWEEN II's throat slicings and orb-stabbings are meant to serve as example of horrific restraint and cinematic style.

Even for the sake of a few derivative thrills, could any shocker survive the premise of a hospital backdrop: there is only a single medic on duty for an emergency room and more than five floors? when an entire staff is decimated and the telephones go dead, no one thinks to use the ambulance's two-way radio or yank one of the prominently-displayed fire alarms; where a formerly catatonic psychiatric patient like Michael Meyers suddenly becomes a regular hotshot at installing intravenous tubes and injecting hypodermics? Where . . . well, why go on? If this is medical care, cancel my Blue Cross.

Malpractice is evident in any

number of director Rosenthal's camera set-ups which invariably telegraph the precise moment and direction from which the Shape is to spring. A Harvard grad, with a background in painting and sculpture as well as filmmaking, Rosenthal seems more attuned to exploiting the menace of dark hospital corridors with pools of light and shadow and a brief, effective dream sequence than in more straight-ahead scenes of attack. He and cinematographer Dean Cundey nicely charge-up the film's quieter moments and build-ups, but HALLOWEEN II mostly sours and fumbles its payoffs.

Director Rosenthal, who was signed for the film on the basis of his short "The Toyer," elicits suitable performances from his and-then-there-were-none cast. The likeable Curtis (who seems to have less than thirty lines of dialogue) and Pleasence (who never seems to stop talking) fare the best. Pleasence has the resources and wit to utter lines like "We're all afraid of the dark inside ourselves," with tongue planted firmly in cheek. He gives the film the sense of fun the rest of the proceedings sorely lack.

The producers hint that HALLOWEEN II represents a fond farewell to the trend spawned by their first film (that, and the fiery send-off they give to the Shape). So the prospects of HALLOWEEN III seem hazy. But should this lacklustre continuation of the Michael Meyers saga click at the boxoffice, watch for Dr. Sam to sweep the ashes from his trenchcoat, mumbling inanities about the legend of the Phoenix—while the Shape emerges from the flames and staggers off in a renewed pursuit of Laurie Strode. And, of course, a brand new face mask. **Stephen Rebello**

SHORT NOTICES

THE BOOGENS

Directed by James L. Conway. 10 81. 95 minutes. In Color. With Rebecca Balding, Fred McCarren, Anne-Marie Martin, John Crawford, Med Florey.

An unpromising ad campaign ("There is no escape!") is overcome by director James L. Conway, whose steady, sensible hand guides an attractive young cast through some grimly spooky moments. An abandoned Colorado silver mine is home for the title critters, nasty tentacled things with sharp teeth and big appetites who are set free when the mine is reopened. Conway (responsible for a number of Sunn Classic pseudo-documentaries) and screenwriters David O'Malley and Bob Hunt offer a scenario that has the unassuming freshness of a child's giddiest nightmare, and create likeable, believable characters whose bloody fates are startling and affecting. Besides the neat trick of successfully turning secondary characters into protagonists, Conway makes the story seem plausible, even though the screenplay offers no explanation for the monsters. Shock effects are judiciously paced and staged, and dialogue is bright. The boogens (created by Ken Horn and SWAMP THING's William Munn) are calculated scene-stealers, but the real star may be a remarkable little poodle whose monster-baiting brings to THE BOOGENS just the right touch of cheery impudence.

David Hogan

DARK NIGHT OF THE SCARECROW

Directed by Frank De Felita. CBS-TV. In Color. 9 24 81. 2 hrs. With: Charles Durning, Robert F. Lyons, Claude Earl Jones, Lane Smith, Tonya Crowe, Larry Drake.

DARK NIGHT OF THE SCARECROW is an interesting little film that manages to rise above many of its large screen contemporaries. The plot centers on four men who track down an ill retarded man (Bubba) thought to have murdered a little girl.

They find him hiding inside a scarecrow and riddle him with bullets. The four escape legal prosecution, but soon they all meet horrible deaths.

Director Frank De Felita brings to television as an adept handling of characterization and plot as he brings to his novels, *The Reincarnation of Peter Proud*, *Audrey Rose* and *The Entity*. Instead of the usual bad guy stereotypes, DARK NIGHT OF THE SCARECROW offers a character study of the leader of the vigilantes, revealing he had his own motives for killing Bubba. There are instances of dark humor as well; while the first victim is ground up in his pulp machine there is a quick cut to red preserves splattering on a plate; and later after another man is killed with a shovel, his hat remains stuck to the weapon.

The scarecrow is used to good effect. It is seldom seen but always present. Inanimate for most of the film, the audience isn't certain whether the scarecrow or some human influence is responsible for the deaths. Certainty comes only at the end, when the leader comes face to face with the scarecrow.

Dan Scapperotti

THE GRIM REAPER

Directed by Joe D'Amato. A Film Ventures International Release. 10 81. 81 minutes. In Color. With Tisa Farrow, Saverio Vallone, Vanessa Steiger, George Eastman, Bob Larson.

This is a poorly-dubbed, low-budget, Italian production. Tisa Farrow hitchhikes a ride on a yacht of some rich American vacationers. Farrow is returning to a remote Greek island where she is the paid companion of a blind teenager. The others tag along as a lark. When they arrive, the island is devoid of people, except for a crumbling corpse and a mysterious woman who runs when she sees them. The blind teenager tells them that someone who smells of blood is loose on the island. One by one, the

island-hopping vacationers are killed off—bitten to death by a crazed cannibal. Acting and other production values are poor.

Judith P. Harris

THE HAUNTING OF M

Written, directed and produced by Anna Thomas. A Nu-Image Film Release. 10 81(1979). In Color. 100 minutes. With Sheelagh Gilbey, Nini Pitt, Evie Garratt, Alan Hay, Jo Scott Matthews, Isolda Caelet.

Anna Thomas' first feature film is a lavishly mounted ghost story full of good, spooky intentions that just miss their mark onscreen. Set on a remote, turn-of-the-century country estate, the plot involves two sisters, one of whom, Marianna, is pursued by the ghost of the long-dead lover of her old spinster aunt, who has come to reclaim his lost love. But this very traditional Gothic tale unfolds at a snail's pace without surprise or innovation, lacking either the coiled momentum of compelling psychological drama or the chilling perversity of an effective shocker.

The film has some fine moments. The old cook injects a mysterious, sense of foreboding in a short speech on ghost lore, and there's one terrific, heart-stopping scare when the heroine, Halina (Nini Pitt), encounters the silent ghost at her sister's bedside. Gregory Nava's natural light cinematography is impressive and, as the ghost, William Bryan looks like one of the delightfully eccentric Gothic figures drawn by Edward Gorey. But, overall, Thomas just doesn't have much of a feel for the genre; whatever intensity she does build up ultimately dissipates in the murky stateliness of it all.

Lisa Jensen

NIGHTMARE

Written and directed by Romano Scavolini. 21st Century Distribution release. In color. 10 81. 97 minutes. With Baird Stafford, Sharon Smith, C.J. Cooke, Mik Cribben.

Tatum (Baird Stafford) is given a test drug, to which he responds so favorably that he is released from prison. He high-tails it straight to New York's Time Square porno district and thereafter to Florida, stabbing and dismembering women along the way. The makeup effects, prominently ascribed in the opening credits to Tom Savini, are grisly and fairly realistic. Print ads which also ballyhooed Savini appeared in *Variety* as recently as two weeks before the film's N.Y. opening, but Savini apparently did nothing more than give advice over the phone to the film's producers. Nonetheless, NIGHTMARE certainly looks like a Savini opus. The non-gore scenes are dull and padded and most of the cast is amateurish. The like-father, like-son shock ending is a surprise to no one. The only thing preventing NIGHTMARE from being as sleazy and disgusting as MANIAC is the blessed absence of Joe Spinell as actor and scriptwriter.

Judith P. Harris



The slasher killer of NIGHT SCHOOL.

NIGHT SCHOOL

Directed by Kenneth Hughes. Paramount release of a Lorimar production. 10 81. 89 minutes. In color. With: Leonard Mann, Drew Snyder, Rachel Ward, Joseph R. Sicari.

A machete-wielding maniac clad in black leather is decapitating the female students attending night school classes in anthropology at Wendell College in Boston. Yet another in the computerized classmate homicide sub-genre. This is much the same formula as all the rest—peeping toms, shower scenes, lesbianism, ludicrous motivation—but just to mix things up a bit there's also a ridiculous Papuan New Guinea ritual slant. Kenneth Hughes directs by the numbers and there is the worst acting imaginable from Rachel Ward in one of the pivotal roles. NIGHT SCHOOL bores to distraction. Alfred Sole, the original director wisely bowed out of this one.

Alan Jones

STRANGE BEHAVIOR

Directed by Michael Laughlin. World Notal Release. 99 minutes. In Color. 10 81. With Michael Murphy, Louise Fletcher, Dan Shor, Fiona Lewis, Arthur Dignam, Dev Young.

A series of mutilation murders occurs in a sleepy midwest town. Police chief Brady (Michael Murphy) notices the victims are all children of the men who opposed a mad scientist, LeSange (Arthur Dingham). Although buried three years ago, there is nothing in LeSange's coffin but leg bones. His assistant (Fiona Lewis) is performing experiments on the town's high schoolers.

The film has some nice camp performances, notably from Lewis in a lowcut skintight cashmere dress and Dragon Lady hairstyle; and Dingham, who looks like he escaped from THE ROCKY HORROR PICTURE SHOW. Made in New Zealand under the more marketable title DEAD KIDS, the film has plodding direction by Michael Laughlin. It is saved, however, by extremely realistic and occasionally gory special effects from Craig Reardon, who is rapidly becoming a makeup effects artist to reckon with.

Judith P. Harris.

Mad Doctor Fiona engages in some STRANGE BEHAVIOR.



LETTERS



THE LATEST IN A WAVE OF NASTY LETTERS ABOUT OUR THANKLESS CADRE OF REVIEWERS

I really don't mind that Steven Dimeo didn't like *AN AMERICAN WEREWOLF IN LONDON* [11:4:10], as it does have obvious flaws. But what annoys me is that he doesn't seem to understand the film.

Any reviewer who finds Van Morrison's "Moondance" too abrasive for a love scene has been out of college for too long. And could Dimeo really not see that the final rendition of "Blue Moon" helped improve one of the worst film endings of the year? What seems the hardest for Dimeo to understand is that John Landis is proving the viability of a new, humorous direction for horror. He may say that humor cuts down on horror, but could it be that there's an audience out there for fun horror films? After all, the film is way up there in your Boxoffice Survey. I suggest that Mr. Dimeo think about these questions. Maybe he'll be better able to judge the next films that take this direction.

John Schmall
New York, N.Y.

I'd have to agree with those who complain of a lack of consistency in critical stands. I don't expect all your

reviewers to agree on whether a film is good or not, but I'd like to feel there is some overall direction for the magazine. I used to publish a journal of science fiction criticism, so I'm aware of the problem. But some consistency can be achieved by using reviewers who at least agree on the basics (in my case, people who liked '60s SF better than '40s) and by letting them air their differences with each other in the letter column and in the form of group reviews. I always thought the Film Ratings chart you used to run showing the different reviewers' opinions of the same film was very helpful in comparing my standards with others. I can sympathize with you not wanting to give up two pages for that any more, but maybe you can

work something up that is similar yet smaller.

Jeff Smith
Baltimore, Maryland

I'm terribly afraid—and the ads you've been running in *Variety* reinforce this fear—that CFQ may go too "slick" in a bid for wider acceptance. A serious review of fantastic films means analysis, retrospective, opinions and speculation—not just who's making what film, how great it might be, a review saying how bad it was and an article on how the special effects were accomplished.

Among other changes, I'd like to suggest a return of an old feature, the Film Ratings checklist. In the past three weeks, the Washington D. C. area has been treated (and I use that

term with tongue in cheek) to the following genre films: *IT CAME FROM THE GRAVE*, *BLOOD-EATERS*, *NIGHT OF THE DEMON*, *THE CREEPER*, *SEED OF TERROR*, *GARDEN OF THE DEAD*, *DEMONOID* and *SCARED TO DEATH*. Frankly, I'd never even heard of these films, but I'm sure some of your correspondents must have. It would be nice to have a list of the genre films in release across the country—and I'm sure readers would appreciate being tipped off that *NIGHT OF THE DEMON* is a re-release of *THE TOUCH OF SATAN*.

Furthermore, a compilation of ratings from your regular reviewers would alleviate the problem of printing a single, in-depth review of a film, and then having readers complain because they didn't agree with it. An average rating from some of your more reliable writers would balance the scales a bit.

David Wilt
College Park, Maryland

We've gotten the idea that readers aren't completely satisfied with our review section, and have entertained the notion of reinstating the Film Ratings chart mentioned above. The chart, which appeared in the magazine several years ago, compiled the opinions of eight reviewers—geographically and ideologically balanced—on as many as 78 different films. Using a simple numerical rating system, readers could tell at a glance how a film stacked up. Unfortunately, the chart took up a full two pages, and was crowded out of the issue. We agree it might be the right time to squeeze the chart back in.

CORRECTIONS:

In a previous issue, we incorrectly identified material from CONAN, THE BARBARIAN. Photos from CONAN are © 1981 Dino De Laurentiis Corporation (DDL). In addition, a photo caption for CAT PEOPLE [11:4:20] failed to identify cinematographer John Bailey and camera operator Steven Yaconelli.

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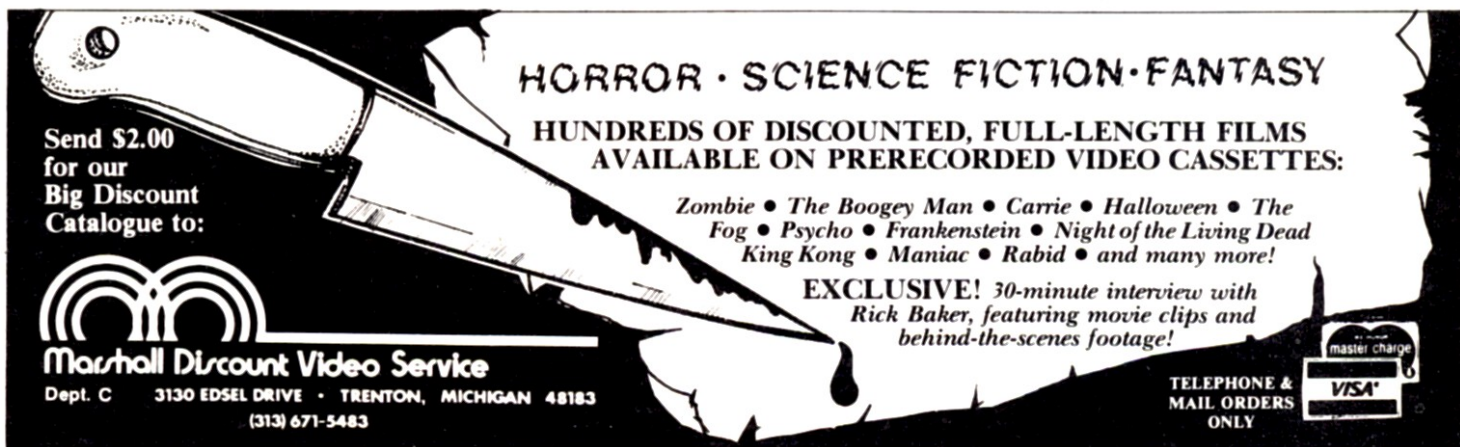
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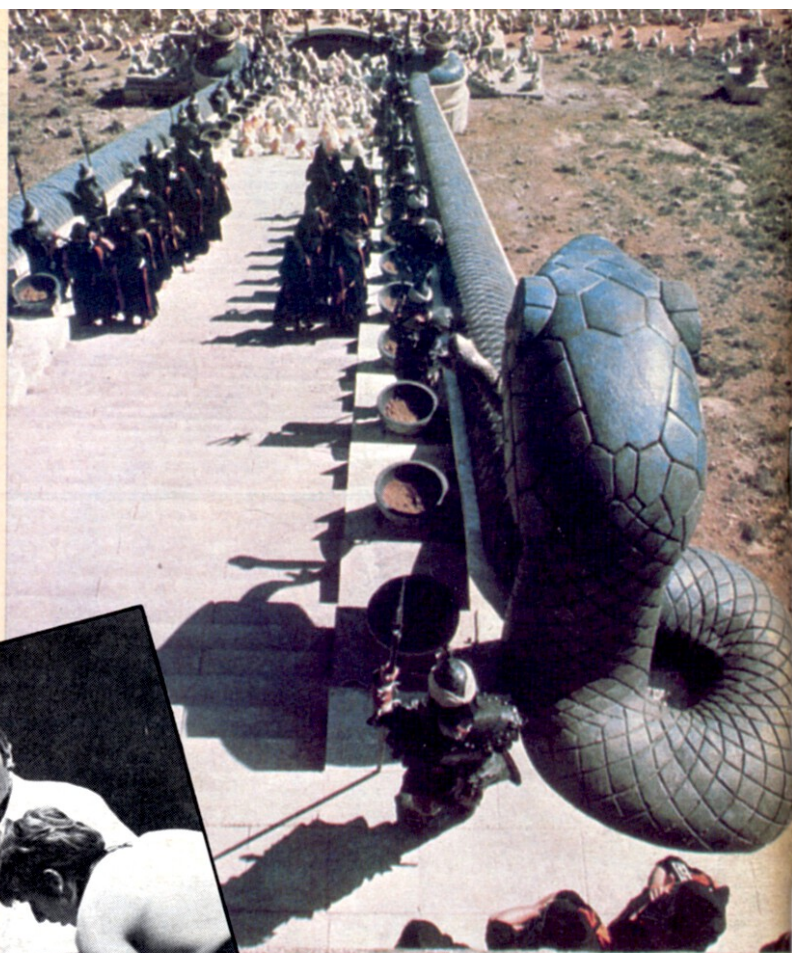
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